

OLDENBURG

six themes



GEOMETRIC MOUSE



THREE-WAY PLUG



FAGENDS



CLOTHESPIN

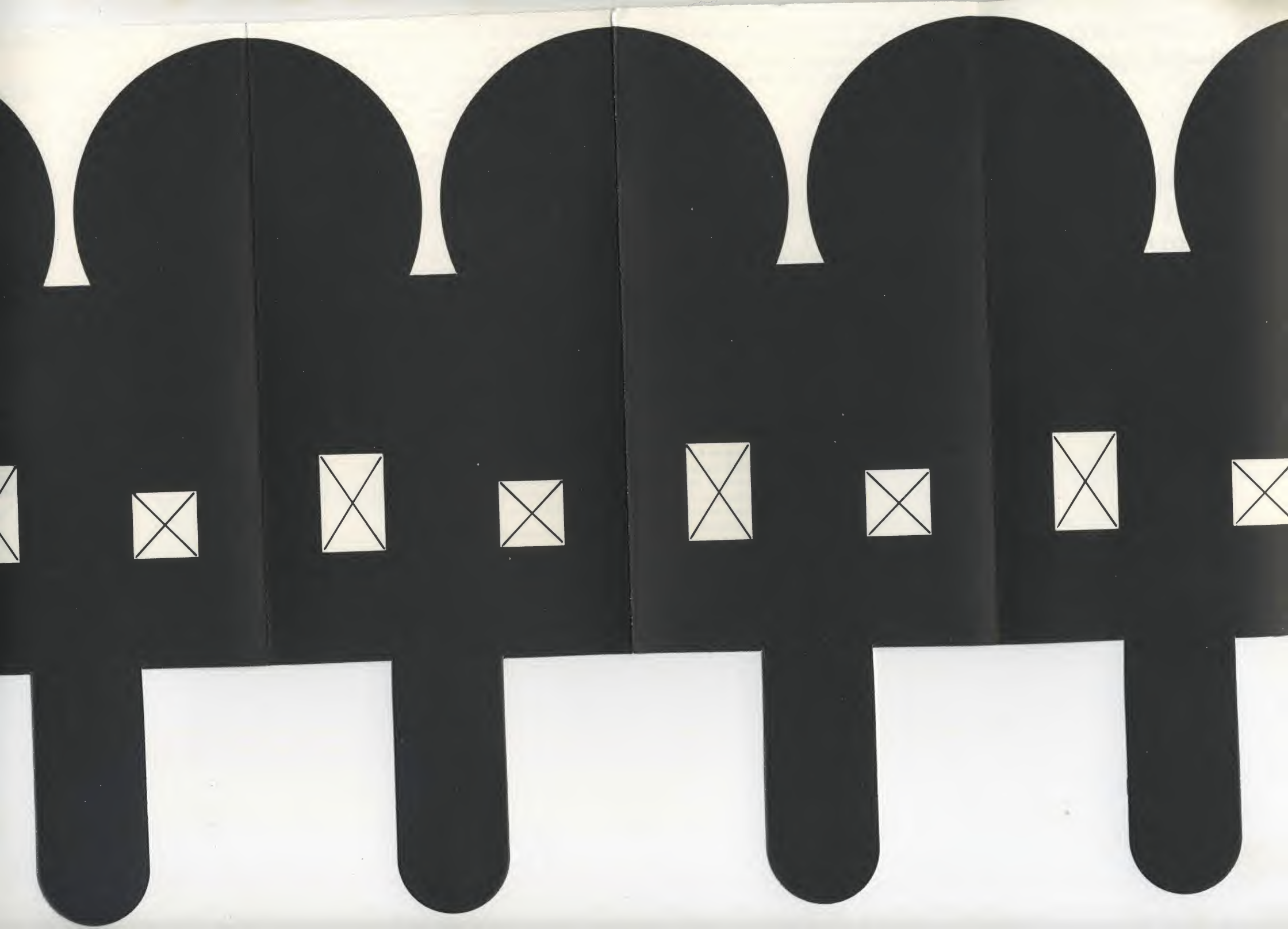


TYPEWRITER ERASER



**STANDING MITT
WITH BALL**

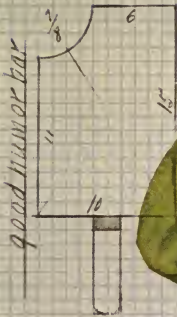




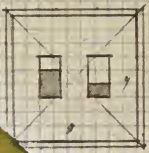
7

equals

light switches



good humor bar



=



three-way plug

X

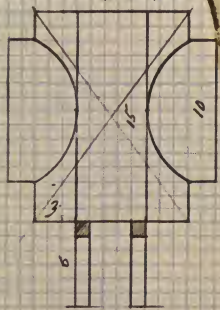
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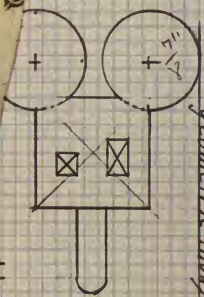
equals

three-way plug



=

equals



geometric mouse

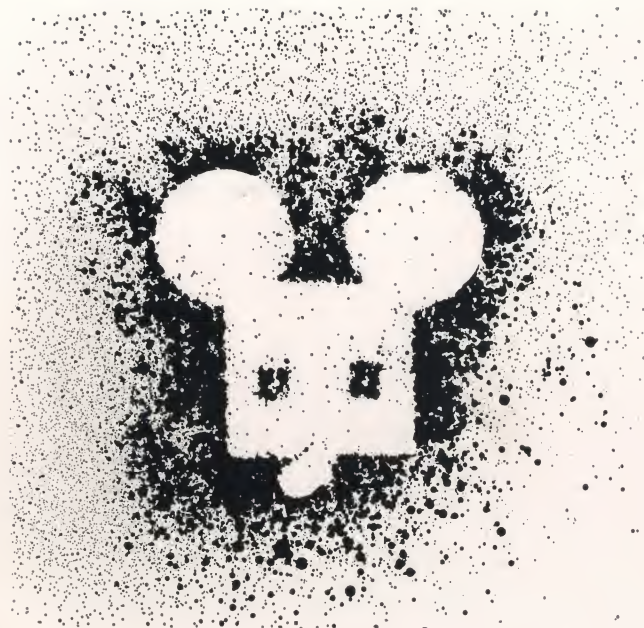
+

The Museum of Modern Art (Moderna Museet) Stockholm, Sweden opens an extensive exhibition of the work of CLAES OLDENBURG on September 18 - October 30, 1966.

48 examples of his sculpture, paintings and drawings of the past 3 years comprise the show which is scheduled to tour to other European capitols. The catalogue will contain many reproductions in black and white and in color.

A first comprehensive showing of OLDENBURG work in Europe, this exhibition is eagerly awaited and will, no doubt, add considerably to the artist's growing reputation abroad. The artist has been invited to supervise the installation at Stockholm.

An exhibition of his more recent work is scheduled to open in New York in February - March 1967 and announcements and catalogue will follow.



Claes Oldenburg Geometric Mouse

OCT 15 1971

Scale C

Notes on the Geometric Mouse Subject

The GM has been around in my work since 1963, and has been put to many uses.

The subject is not a whole mouse, just the head. The GM is a mechanical or conceptual version of an organic subject—therefore a “head” subject.

The GM is hieratic as well as mathematical. It has been used as a Mask—in a performance of *Movye-house*, a “happening” in 1965.

The GM is a sign and a typographical presence. Two prominent characters in the GM are “H” and “M”. My typewriter is a Geometric Mouse.

For the animator, the mouse is a symbol of pen or

pencil in motion and therefore a natural subject. One of the images contained in the GM sign is the early film camera, in silhouette, flat like film.

The precise mechanism of the GM C suggests a camera. The surface feels and looks like the inside of an old box Kodak.

The GM is a face and also a facade—a housefront, a scenery flat. The GM can be imagined to be any size.

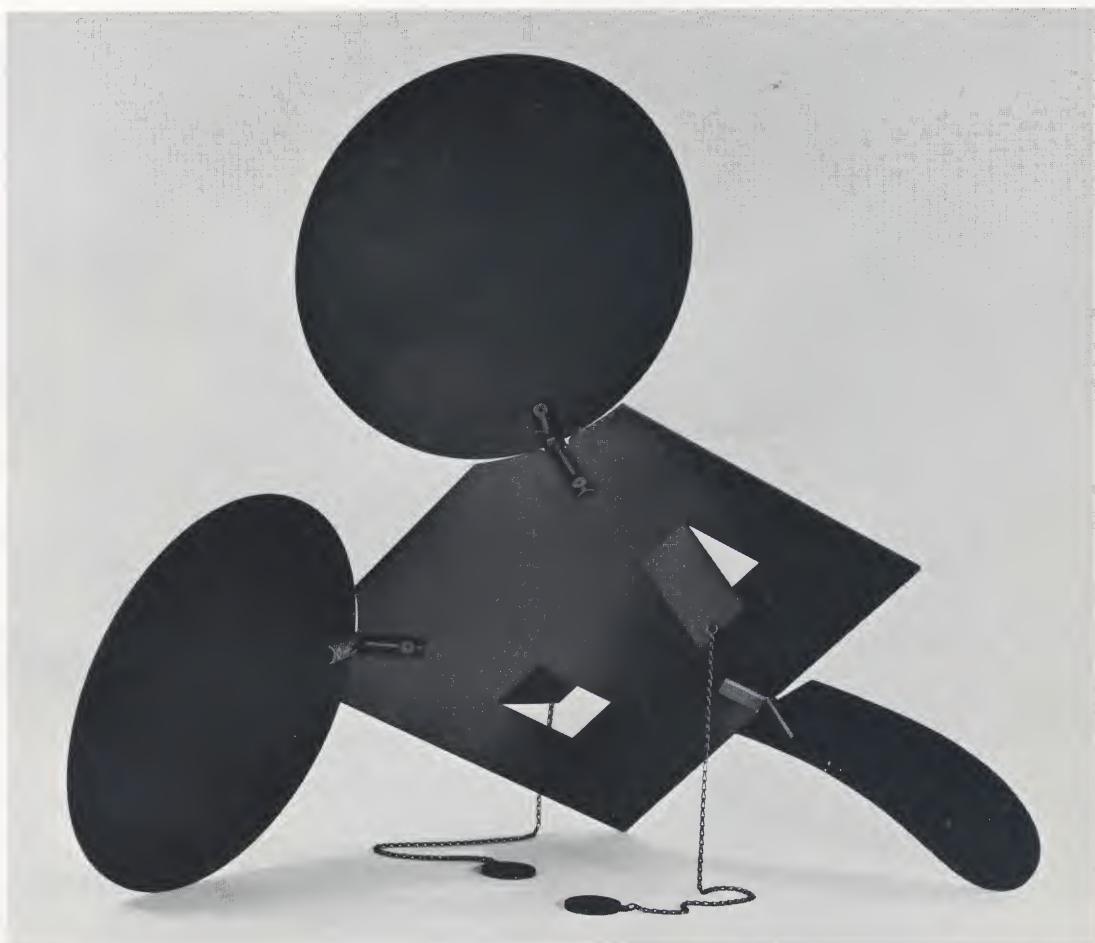
As a good luck charm and as an autoportrait, the GM was used as an announcement, a letterhead and a banner.

Mouse—Mouseum—Mouseoleum.

GM—GeMini (Minnie).

The GM is a monument to the senses in the head: the eyes, the ears, the nose. The sense of touch is supplied in setting up the monument.

The GM is nocturnal, and therefore is the reverse of Ignatz (in *Krazy Kat*), who is a white mouse in a night world. The GM is a night mouse in a white world, a



cover of darkness.
 M is its own shadow.
 atches/windows/shades/shutters/lids indicate
 of somnolence or wakefulness. The GM arrives
 , flat like a drawing. It rises from bed, to start its
 exercises (with your help).
 apes are extremely general — rectangles,
 s. Only the "nose" is somewhat subjective and
 ular, like a spill of oil, though it is defined by
 ural requirements. The GM is a device for
 ing certain conditions of nature, especially
 y and the changing appearances of planes in
 . The "tears" (shade pulls) are like pods, finding
 vel of the surface on which the GM rests.
 rs to the bottom, double stethoscopes and
 cles. The settling down on several points of
 ct suggests lunar landings.

M became three-dimensional in response to the
 que of steel planes welded together at
 cott Inc. I wanted to set several planes of steel
 he air — space cleavers — and the GM subject fit

the intention. The GM has been done in four scales,
 from the X — having an "ear" diameter of nine feet —
 to the C, whose "ear" diameter is nine inches. An
 Easter Island head which happened to be on the
 Lippincott Inc. premises for copying influenced the
 scale of GMA — a six foot "ear". Scale B has an "ear"
 diameter of eighteen inches.

GM C is a tabletop sculpture, a portrait, a skull, and
 recalls the *Sleeping Muse* (Mouse) of Brancusi, when
 set in the so called basic position (Position I). In the
 larger scales X and A, this position is fixed — the parts
 can not be moved.

Being totally black, the GM tends to cancel a depth
 sensation and produces a variety of "flat" images,
 returning again to the drawing inkblot stage — though
 its wings are spread in space.

These changes are changes of "Expression" too,
 which is interesting because the GM at rest is very
 little more than a grouping of simple geometric
 figures, with no expression whatsoever.

C.O. New York City, March 1971



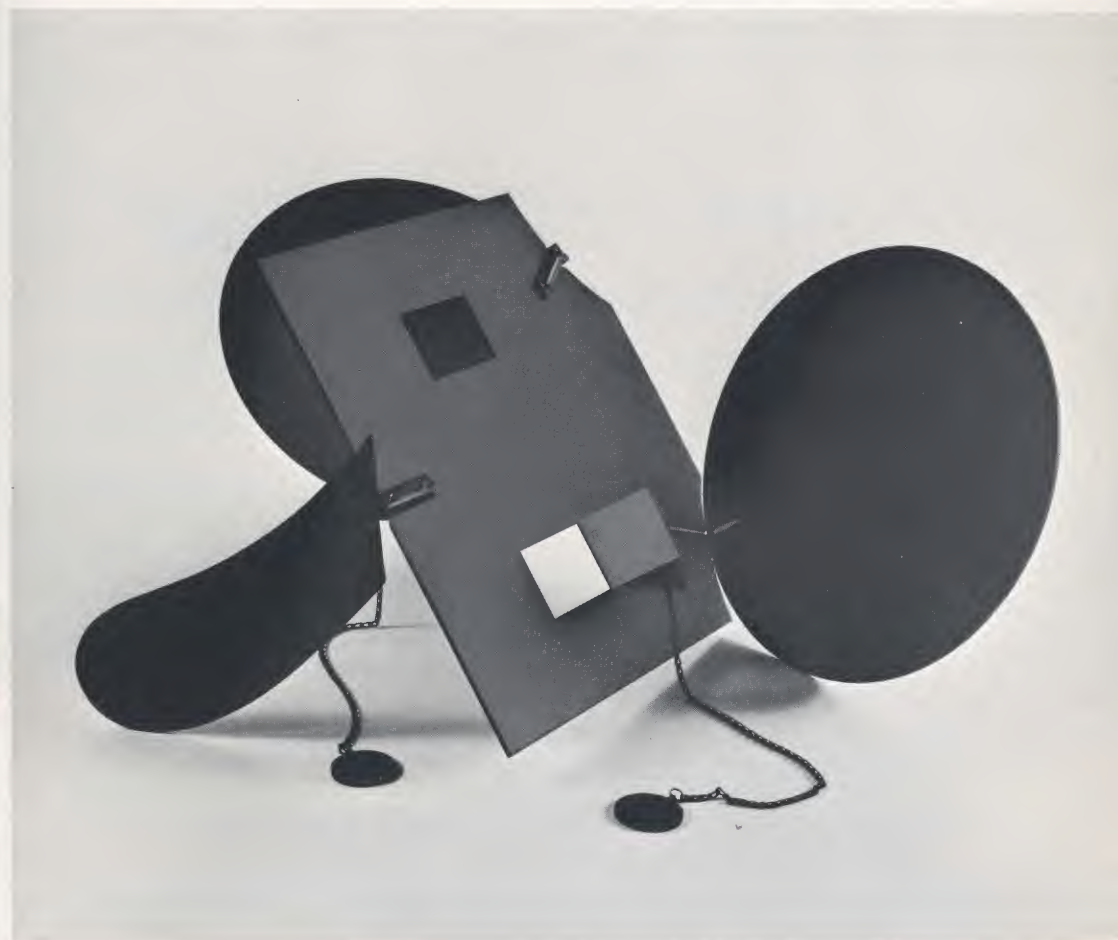
Care and Handling

By its very nature the *Geometric Mouse — Scale C* is fragile and may be damaged if proper care isn't exercised.

There are two possible movements of the "ears" and "nose." They are (1) rotation and (2) hinging.

Caution: Never attempt to rotate an "ear" or the "nose" when that element is in a hinged position. The hinge must be straight (elements in a flat or planar position) before any rotational movements can be performed. When positioning each "window" never pull on the chain. It should be remembered that this sculpture has been produced with the precision of a camera. A great deal of thought and care should be used when handling and positioning this piece.

The surface of the *Geometric Mouse — Scale C* can be cleaned with a damp cloth and dried with a soft lint-free towel. Do not apply any waxes or other materials to the surface.



C L A E S O L D E N B U R G



Claes Oldenburg:
Drawings, 1959–1977
Claes Oldenburg with
Coosje van Bruggen:
Drawings, 1992–1998
in the Whitney Museum
of American Art

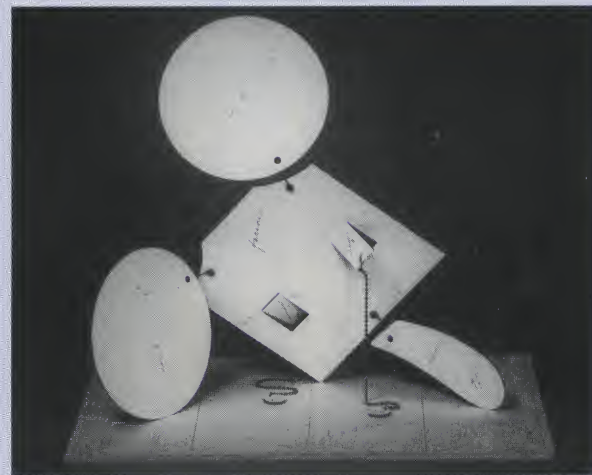
at the
FREDERICK R. WEISMAN
MUSEUM OF ART
PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
May 22 through August 8, 2004



For Sponsors

Geometric Mouse – Scale D

1971. Moveable 3 dimensional object, die cut laminated photo offset printed paper, unlimited edition.
17.5 x 14 inches (6 inch ear)



© 1971 Claes Oldenburg and Gemini G.E.L.

Table and Sponsor Ticket purchasers, and others donating over \$500 will receive Claes Oldenburg's *Geometric Mouse—Scale D*, and will be included in the Gala Honorary Committee listing in the invitation and dinner program.



The Soap at Baton Rouge, 1990. Soap: cast resin, $\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ in. (1.1 x 12.1 x 7 cm); Bed: vinyl filled with aluminum silicate, $\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ in. (1.9 x 24.1 x 31.8 cm); Serigraph on acetate sheet: acetate, $9\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ in. (24.1 x 31.8 cm)

Claes Oldenburg: Multiples in Retrospect 1964-1990 with the new multiple, The Soap at Baton Rouge.

A deluxe edition book with production histories of all the artist's multiples. 160 pages. 142 illustrations, 94 in color. The book is signed and numbered by the artist and is accompanied by the multiple, *The Soap at Baton Rouge*. The multiple is incised with the artist's initials and numbered to correspond with each book. The edition is limited to 250 examples.

Published by Carl Solway Gallery.

The Soap at Baton Rouge

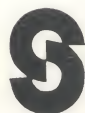
When Carl Solway called me in May 1972 and asked if I would be interested in proposing a large-scale work for Cincinnati, he mentioned that partial funding for such a work might be sought from the Procter & Gamble Corporation, whose world headquarters are in that city. The most familiar product of that company is the bar of pure white soap we all grew up with—IVORY—embossed with its name on top. Its slogan—"It floats"—advertises one of its unique properties, a property it has in common with balloons and ships. What sprang to mind almost immediately, given the location of Cincinnati on the Ohio River, was the combination of a floating soap bar and an old-fashioned, paddle-wheel riverboat—in other words, a colossal bar of Ivory soap.

I proposed to Carl that a colossal soap be made by Procter & Gamble and launched in Cincinnati with appropriate ceremony. It would thereafter float down the Ohio River, stopping at towns along the way. Carl thought that the event could be coordinated with celebrations of the Bicentennial in 1976. Another property of Ivory soap, however, had to be taken into account: its tendency to dissolve, which it does rather more quickly than other soaps. As the colossal soap moved from town to town, it would grow smaller, like the icebergs which, I read somewhere, were going to be towed from the Arctic to Arabia in order to provide fresh water.

At Cairo, Illinois, the now somewhat-less-than-colossal soap would slip into the Mississippi. From there on, it would become more and more difficult to gather people to celebrate the visit of the soap. By the time the soap reached Baton Rouge, it would be the right size for a multiple. Though it seems small, one must remember that in the not-so-distant past, it would have made a very imposing sight, especially coming around the bend in the morning fog.

-Claes Oldenburg

The Soap at Baton Rouge, 1990
Cast resin
 $\frac{7}{16} \times 4\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ in.
(1.1 x 12.1 x 7 cm)



Carl Solway Gallery

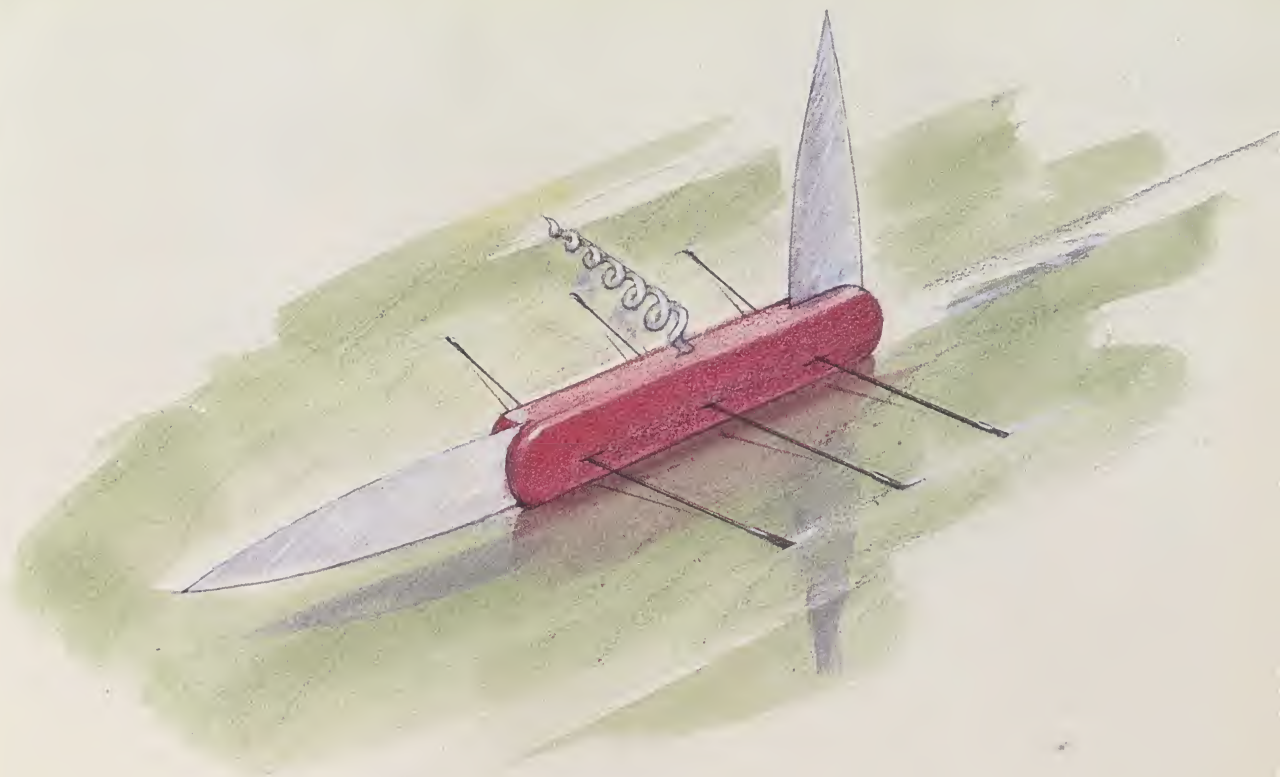
314 West 4th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Ph. 513-621-0069

Fax 513-621-6310







DEC 22 1966



ONE-MAN

OLDENBURG

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

APR 28 1967

Claes Oldenburg

22 November-31 December 1966
Robert Fraser Gallery
69 Duke Street London W 1

1CO681



Claes Oldenburg

ONE-MAN

teabag, 1965

(multiples inc.)

diepgetrokken kunststof

100 x 70 cm. oplage 125

1929 geb. stockholm. woont te new york

1964 '66 '67 eigen tentoonstelling sidney

janis gallery n.y.; 1964 illeana sonnabend;

american pop art, moderne mus. stockholm;

stedelijk museum, amsterdam

1966 eigen tent. moderne mus. stockholm

1967 met dine en segal, art gallery of

ontario toronto; carnegie international

pittsburgh; Kompas 3, van abbe museum,

eindhoven

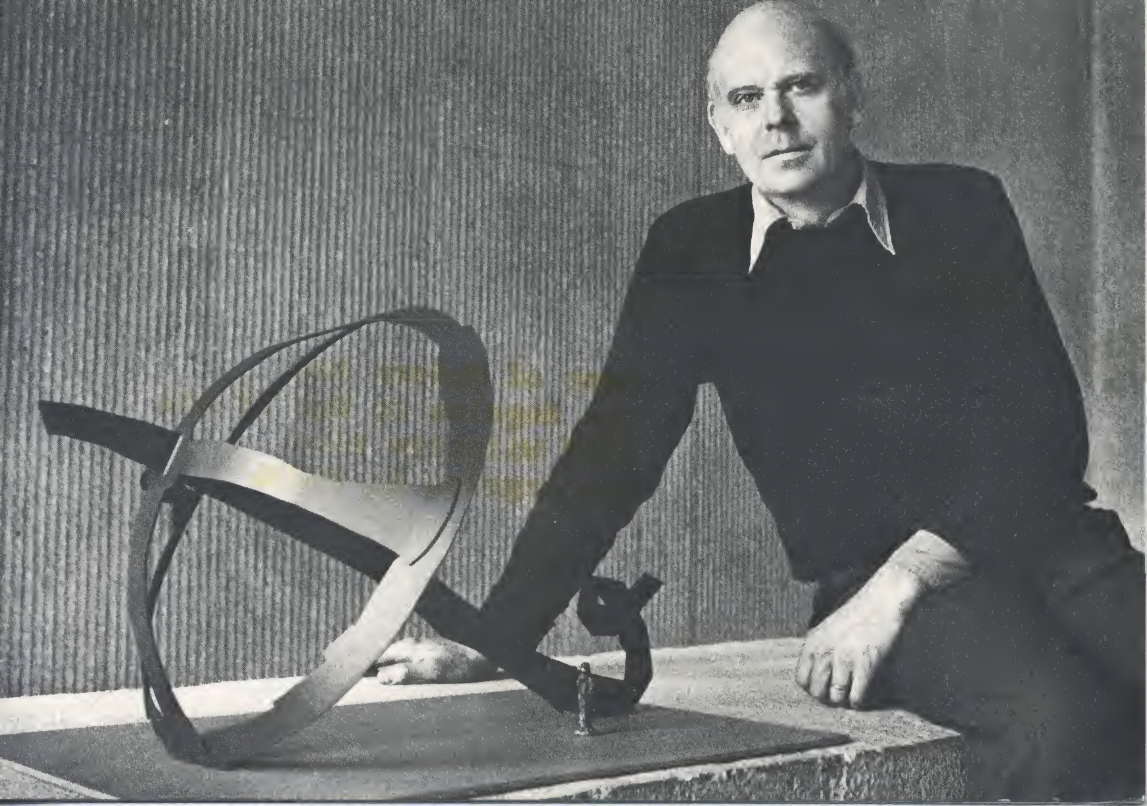
1968 ars multiplicata, kunsthalle keulen;

documenta kassel

Seriaal, Amsterdam

Nieuwe Zijds Voorburgwal 348, Amsterdam

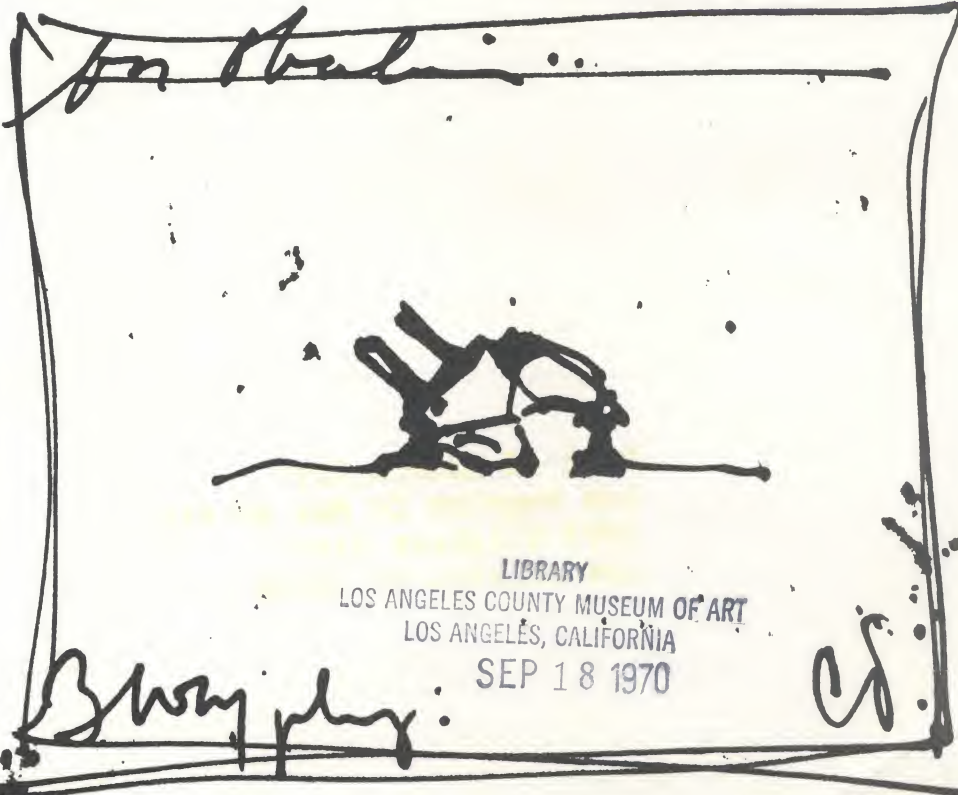
Telefoon: 020-243886



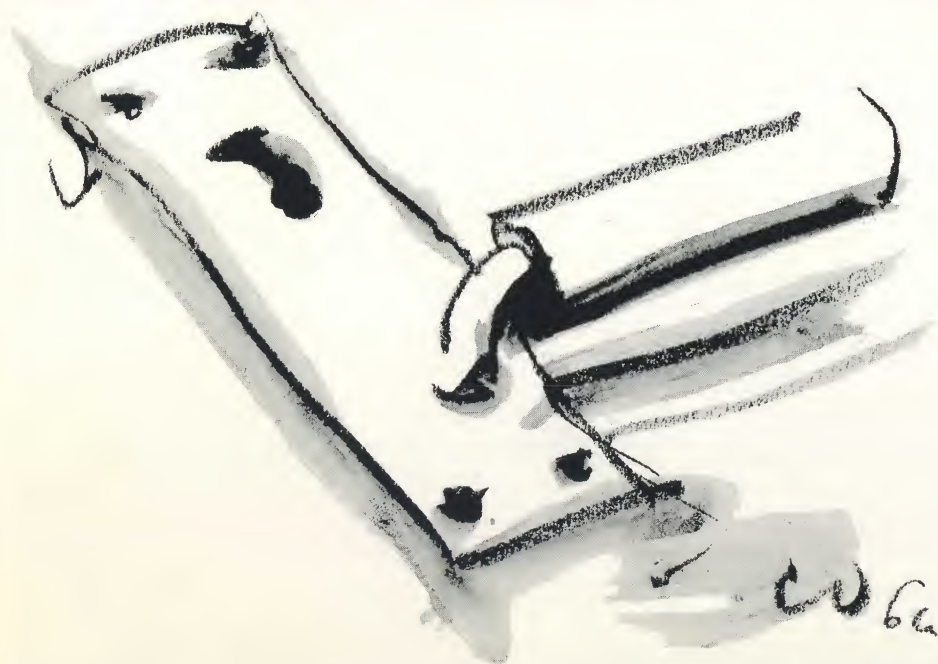


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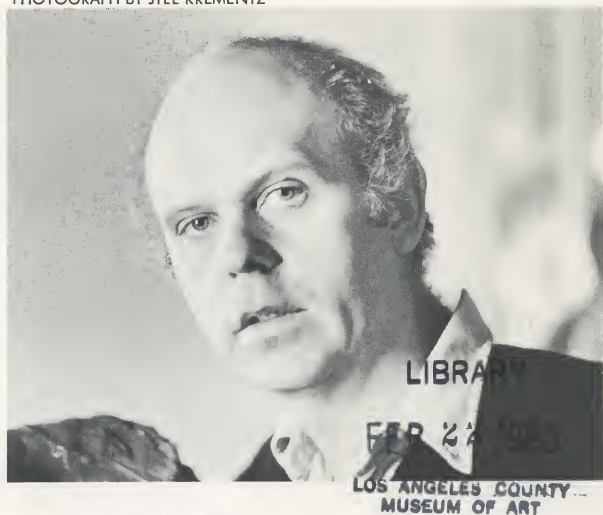
OLDENBURG



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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
SEP 18 1970







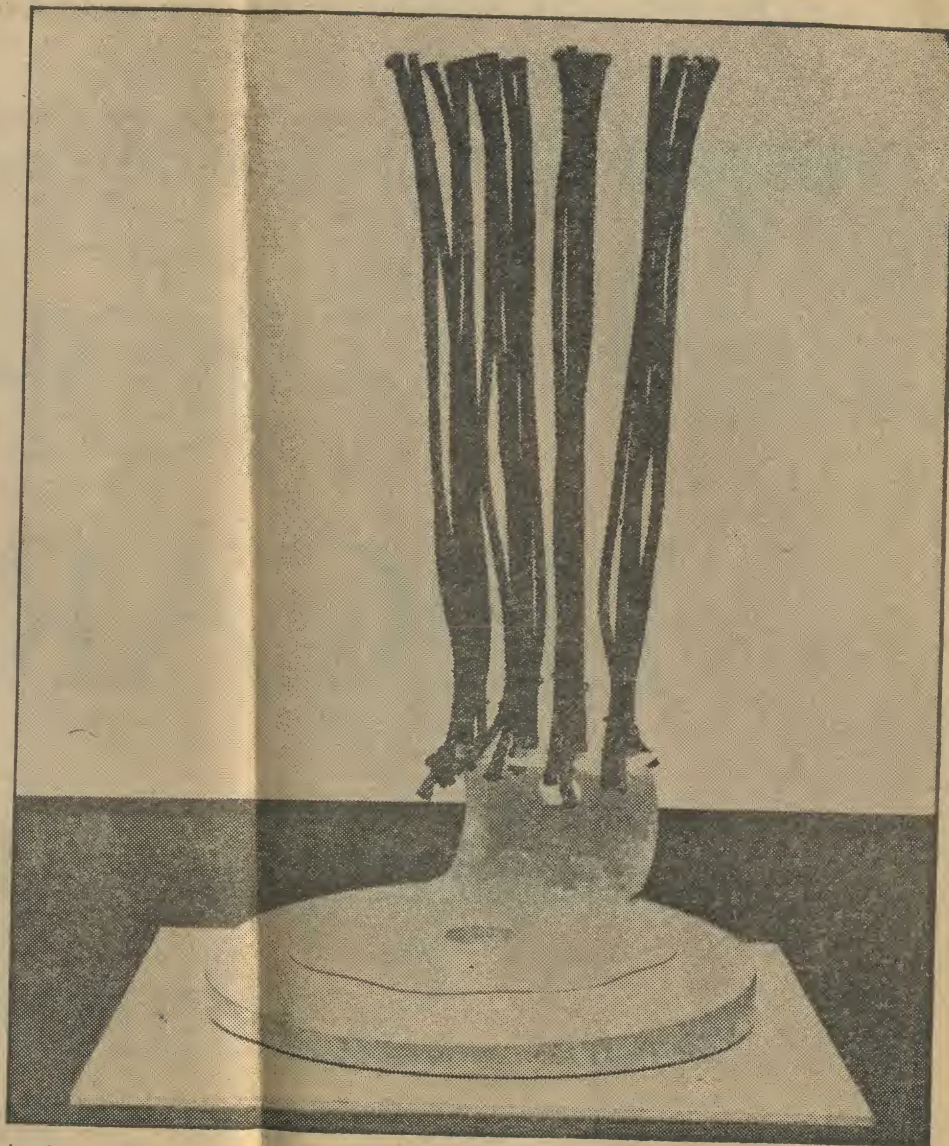
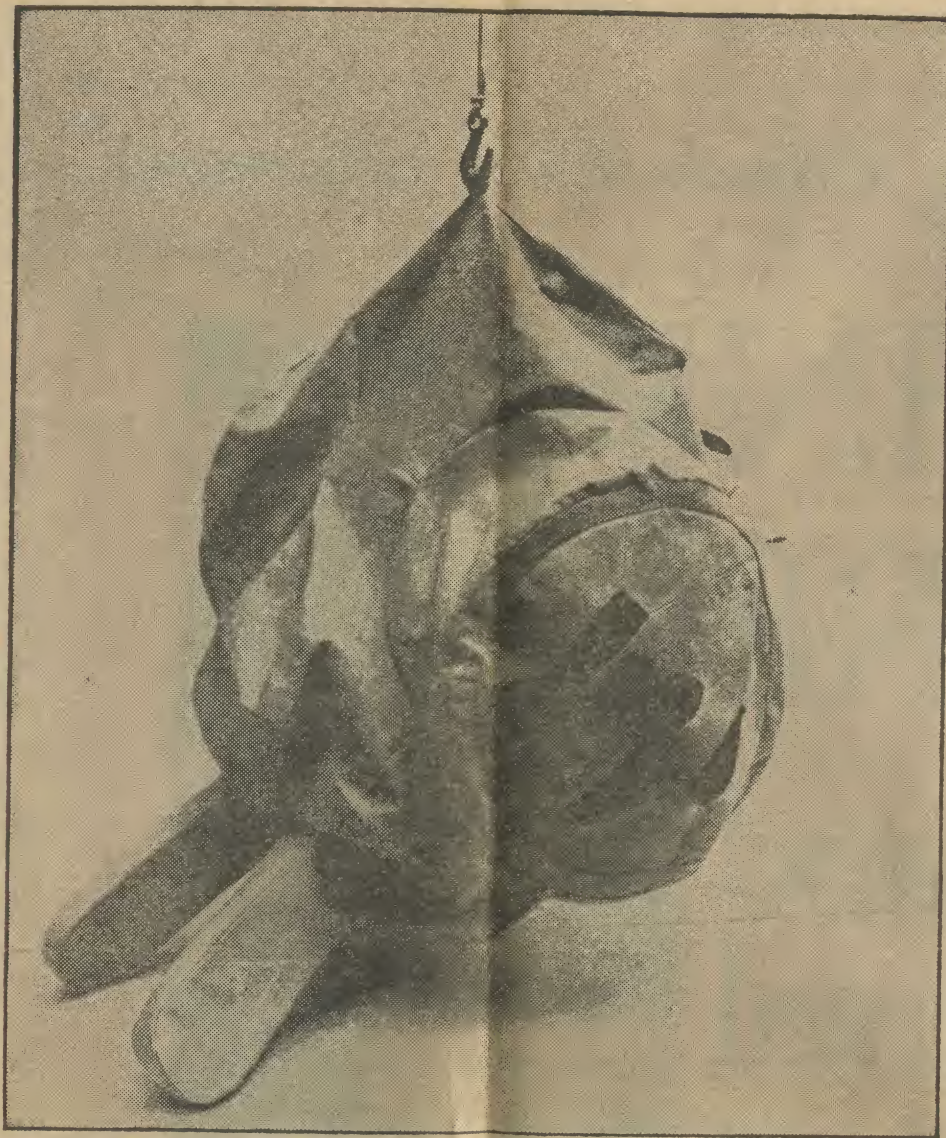
CLAES OLDENBURG

Born 1929 in Stockholm. Studied at the School of Art Institute of Chicago. Was apprentice reporter at the City News Bureau of Chicago, 1950-52. Lives and works in New York.

His one-man shows include Green Gallery, 1962; Dallas Museum of Contemporary Art, 1962; Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, 1963; Galerie Sonnabend, Paris, 1964; Sidney Janis Gallery, 1964, 66, 67; Robert Frazer Gallery, London, 1966; and a retrospective at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1965. He has exhibited with the "New Realists," Sidney Janis Gallery, 1962; "Americans 1963," MOMA; "Pop Art USA," Oakland Museum, 1963; Venice Biennale, 1964; "American Sculpture of the 60's," Los Angeles County Museum, 1967; Sao Paulo Biennale, 1967; "Eight Sculptors: The Ambiguous Image," Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1966; Whitney Annual, 1966; Sculpture Show at the Guggenheim, 1967; "Dine, Oldenburg, Segal," Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, 1967; "Dada, Surrealism," MOMA, 1968; and other major group shows.

His work is included in the collections of leading museums around the world and in major private collections.

Claes Oldenburg has been extensively involved in theater and film-making since 1960 and is one of the founders of the "Happening" movement.

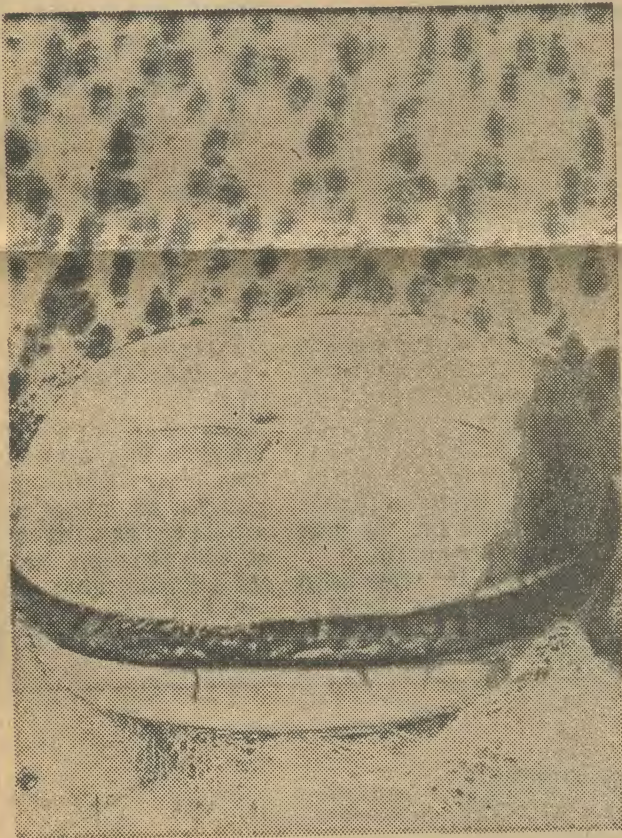


Air of spontaneity and fun conceals the highly disciplined thought and craftsmanship behind such Claes Oldenburg works as "Three Way Plug (Soft)," at left above, and "Heroic Sculpture in the Form of a Bent Typewriter Eraser." Both are included in his "Objects Into Monuments" show continuing through Feb. 6 at the Pasadena Art Museum.

The



THIS IS ART
W. J. Withrow with *Giant Hamburger 1962*



... THIS IS NOT
Just a 39-cent toy that squeaks



THIS IS ART
Brydon Smith and Oldenburg sculpture.

By GEORGE GRAHAM

IN THIS corner, wearing murky brown sailcloth with dull red trim and a pea-green pickle, is Giant Hamburger 1962.

And in that corner, wearing bright red plywood, a gigantic label and a white bottle cap is Giant Catchup Bottle 1967. Both are enormous — the hamburger measures four feet by seven feet, the catchup bottle is nine feet tall.

One is art: the hamburger.

Why? Because it was produced by Claes Oldenburg, a "serious artist" with intent to perform a work of art, while the catchup bottle was produced by a group of students with intent to ridicule Claes Oldenburg.

At least, that's one of the arguments put forward by Art Gallery of Ontario officials in the controversy

created of Oldenburg's work, which has sold for \$2,000.

"One work of art," he says, "is a production of a row, a duality of art." He says that as art, "anything is art," but museum.

"A document points to a burger," he says, "but a burger's sculpture is a first museum made no more Mr. V."

He wants in my belonging. It may be a portable society.

What is a burger? "It is a society of people."

It is a society of people. It is a society of people. It is a society of people.

It is a society of people. It is a society of people. It is a society of people.

It is a society of people. It is a society of people. It is a society of people.

It is a society of people. It is a society of people. It is a society of people.

It is a society of people. It is a society of people. It is a society of people.

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lybear.

ear art?
of teddy-

cannot do. That's art.”
That's art?



... THIS IS NOT
Just a ketchup bottle

gree below temperature
and a fresh snowstorm.
Mayor Paul W. Kaesar was
exuberant. “It was wonder-
ful,” he kept saying. “It’s
the first time an opera com-
pany has ever visited the
Northwest Territories, you
know, and Fort Smith did
it. We brought them here
with the help of the Canada
Council and the Centennial
Commission.”

The performance itself
was smooth, well re-
hearsed, well sung and well
acted.

There was instant appre-
ciation for the charm of
Eleanor Calbes, who sang
and acted delightfully as
Norina. She managed to
captivate everyone on both
sides of the footlights.

People were caught up in
the play, sympathized with
lyric tenor Leonard Bilo-
deau’s plight as Ernesto,
were amused by the
schemes of William Braun
as Dr. Malatesta, and
were regaled by the drama-
tic and vocal antics of Eu-
gene Greene as Don Pas-
quale.

The same could be said of
the alternate cast that com-
pletely won the capacity au-
dience of 400 the evening
before in Uranium City with
Jan Rubes (Don Pasquale),
Sheila Piercey (Norina), Al-
exander Gray (Dr. Malates-
ta), and Ernest Atkinson
(Ernesto).



OLDENBURG

ONE-MAN





C.B. '65

ONE-MAN OLDENBURG, 2

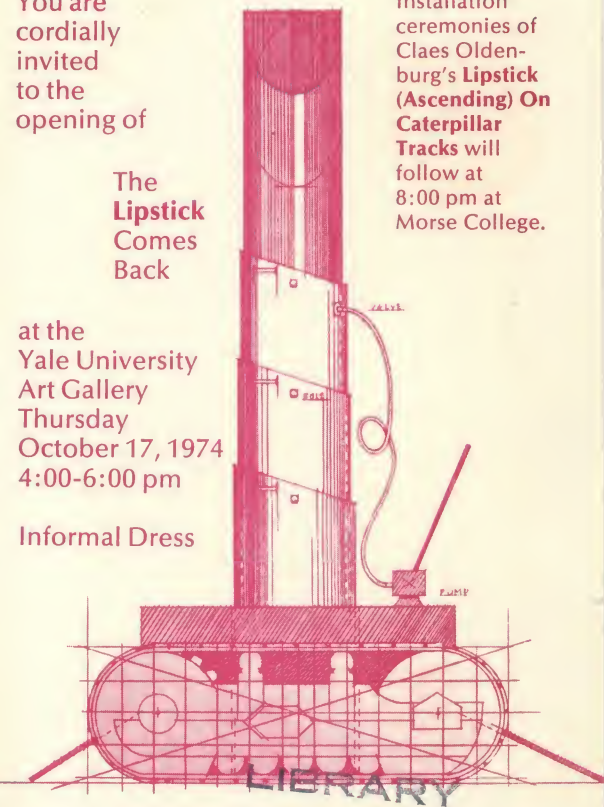
You are
cordially
invited
to the
opening of

The
Lipstick
Comes
Back

at the
Yale University
Art Gallery
Thursday
October 17, 1974
4:00-6:00 pm

Informal Dress

Installation
ceremonies of
Claes Olden-
burg's **Lipstick**
(Ascending) On
Caterpillar
Tracks will
follow at
8:00 pm at
Morse College.



NOV 14 1974

~~LIPSTICK (ASCENDING) ON CATERPILLAR TRACK~~

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
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ONE-MAN

OLDENBURG, CLAES



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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

FEB 25 1972

ONE-MAN

OLDEN BOGGIE



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MAY 25 1973
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
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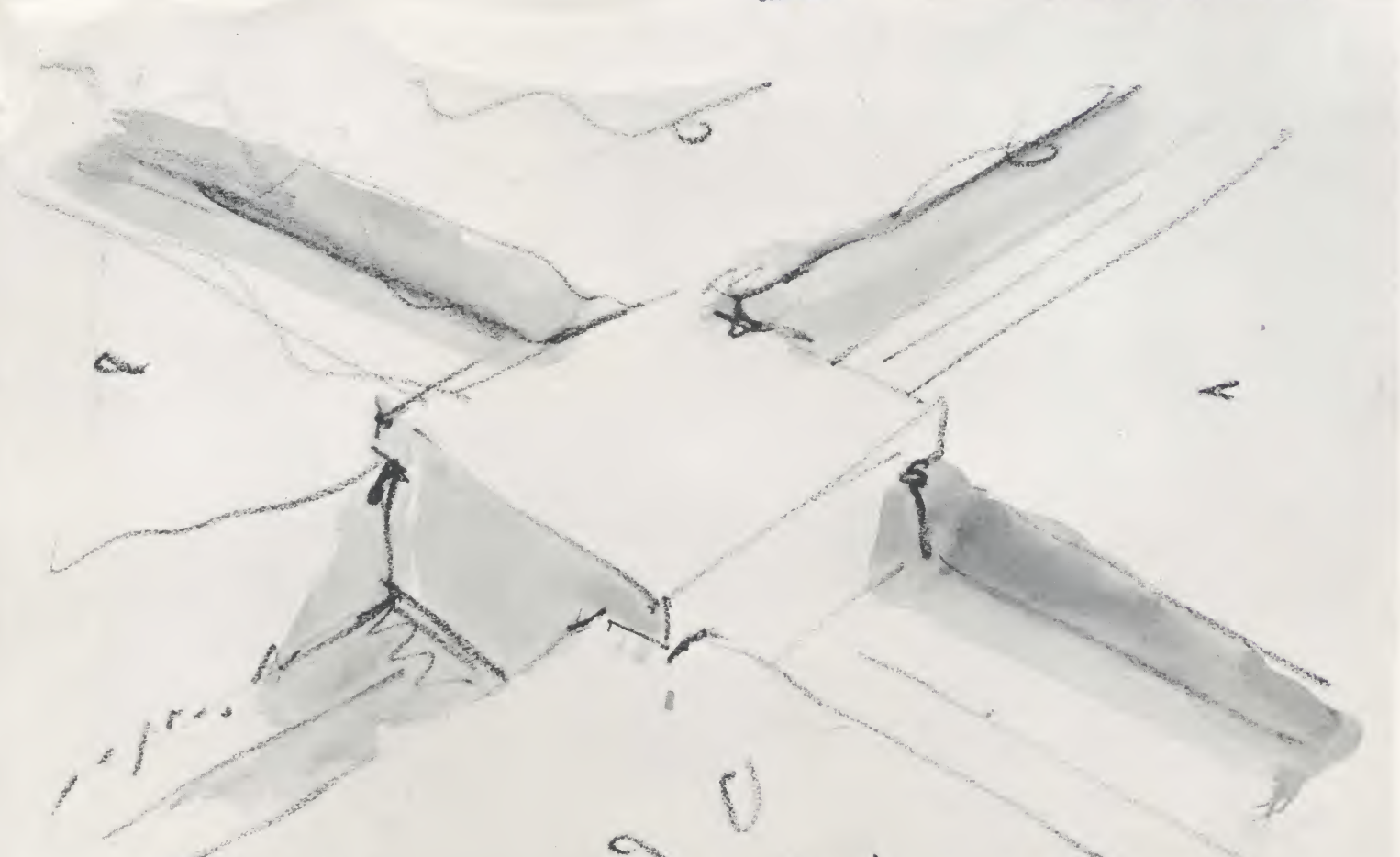
Banana

10-166



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OLDENBURG



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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
OCT 2 1970

Pony - Canal St Advers -

Oldenburg-van Bruggen at Loyola

LOYOLA LAW SCHOOL
LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

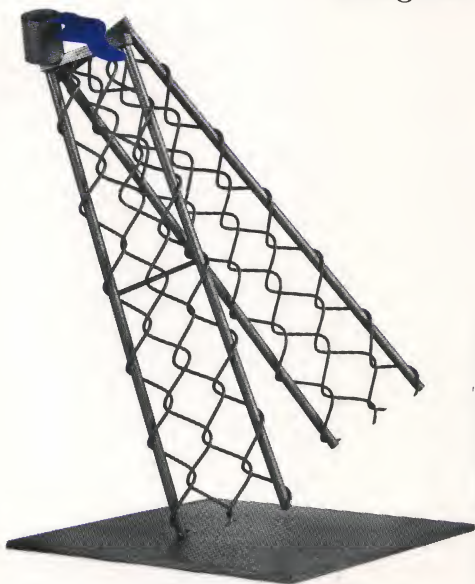
is proud to present

"Toppling Ladder With Spilling Paint"

the only public outdoor

Claes Oldenburg-Coosje van Bruggen sculpture
in the City of Los Angeles

*The Sculpture can be seen daily during daylight hours
throughout the school year.*



Steel & Painted Stainless Steel
14'2" High, 10'8" Wide, 7'7" Deep

PUBLIC OPENING

Saturday, September 27, 1986

9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

*(The artists will be present
from 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon)*

Loyola Law School
1441 West Olympic Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90015

For further information, call
(213) 736-1001

"Toppling Ladder With Spilling Paint"
made possible by a grant
from the Times Mirror Foundation

Claes Oldenburg:
Object Into Monument

ONE-MAN

University Art Museum, Berkeley
March 1-April 9, 1972
Reception for the artist:
Monday, February 28, 6-8 pm.



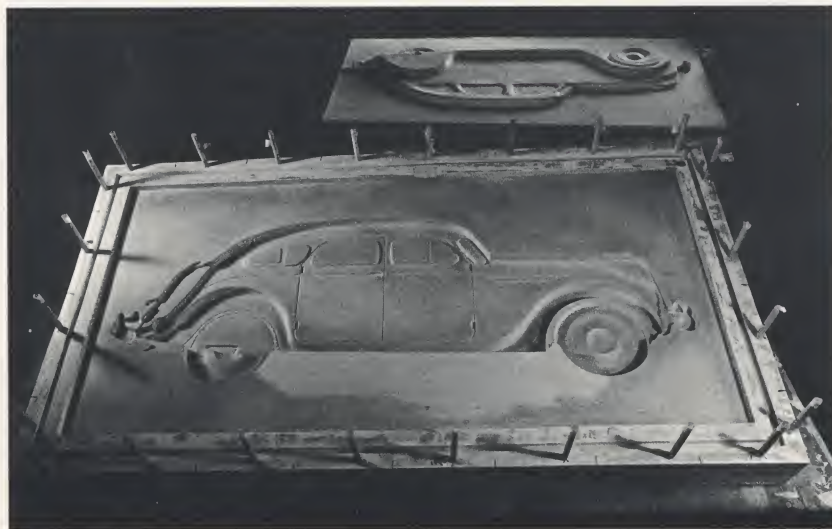


1930-31

1930-31

1930-31





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JUN 5 1970



AUTOBODYS

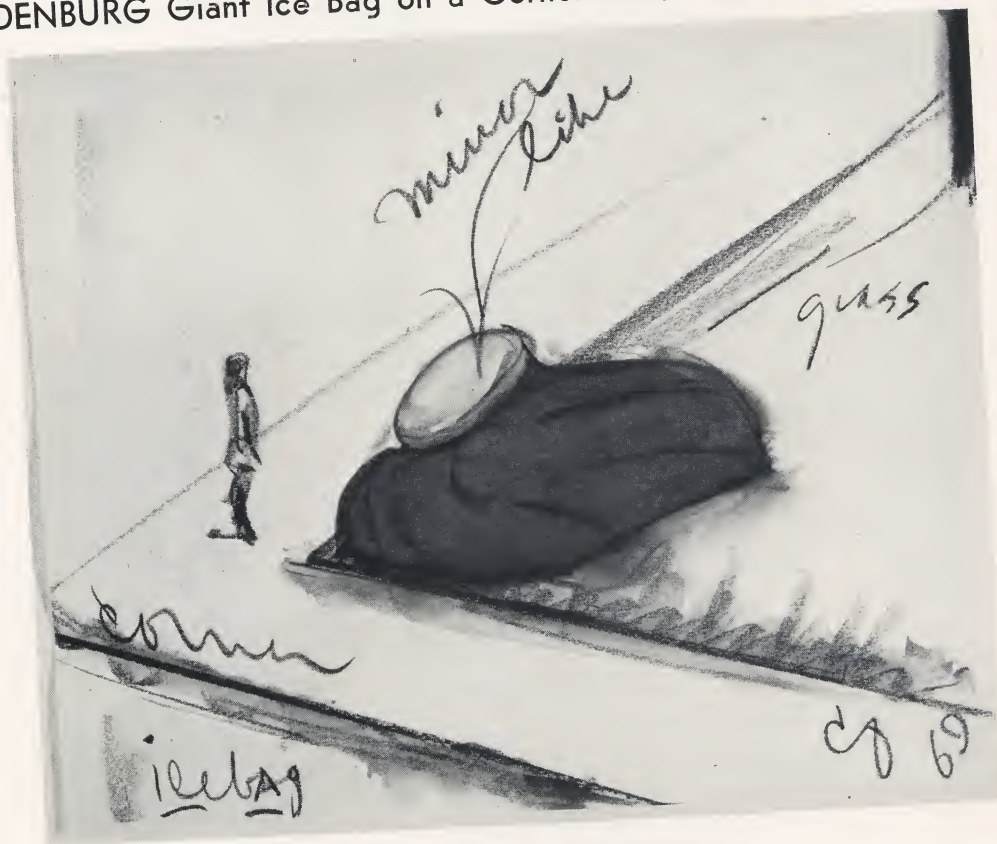
DRIVE IN

Events arranged by Claes Oldenburg in the parking lot of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics 7660 Beverly Blvd. (at Stanley), December 9 and 10 at 8:30 P.M. Contribution \$1.50 No reservations necessary. Parking provided - Bring cars to gate. No cancellation on account of weather. For additional information phone 478-5298

26

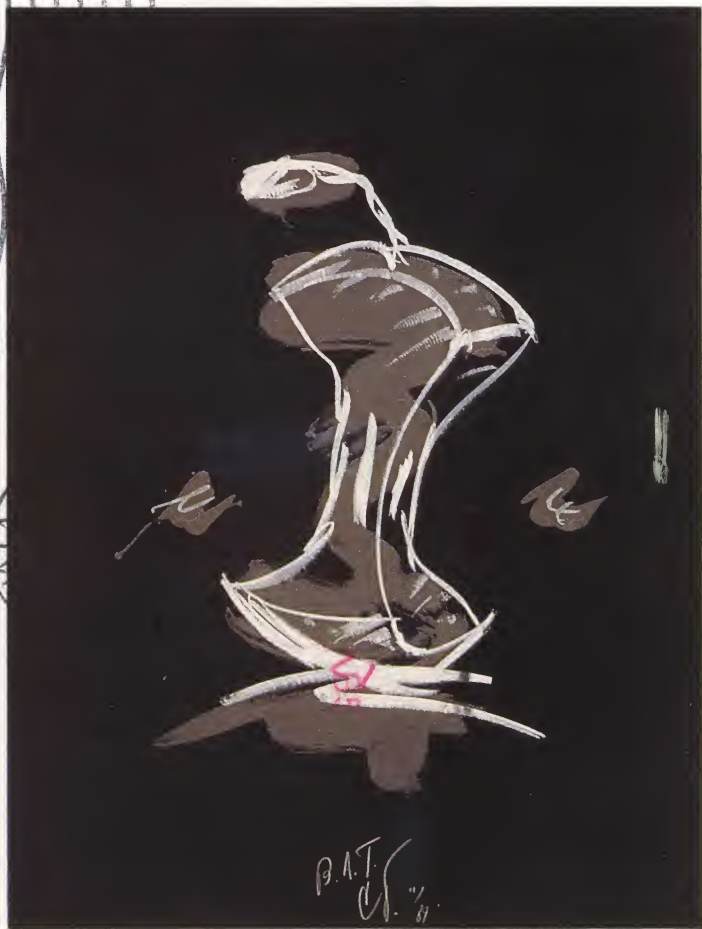


24





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NOV 05 1976
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MUSEUM OF ART



CLAES OLDENBURG AT GEMINI





CLAES OLDENBURG

SCULPTURES 1971-1977

8 JULY 1978 - 19 AUGUST 1978

TYPEWRITER ERASER 1977
4' VERSION EDITION OF 18

GEOMETRIC MOUSE SCALE 13 1971
3'6" x 2' x 3'6" EDITION OF 18

STANDING MITT HALF SCALE MODEL 1974
6' x 2'6" x 3'

TYPEWRITER ERASER 1976
8' x 5'7" x 7'2"

FABEND STUDIES 1975

2'11" x 2'5" x 6'2"

3'8" x 2'5" x 5'7"

3'9" x 2'5" x 4'2"

MARGO LEAVIN GALLERY

812 NO. ROBERTSON BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 90069

(213) 273-0603

GRUNWALD GRAPHIC ARTS FOUNDATION

presents

ELIAS OLOFSSON at GEMINI

with
selections
from the
collection

of

The Cardea Foundation

September 28 to November 8, 1970

Monday through Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Print Gallery, Dickson Art Center
University of California, Los Angeles

You are
cordially invited
to attend the
Preview
September 27,
1970
8:00 p.m. to
10:30 p.m.



OLDENBURG

ONE-MAN



LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

JAN 20 1972



11/11

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NOV 05 1976
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
MUSEUM OF ART



ONE-MAN

OLDENBURG, C





The first Three-Way Plug construction was done in 1965 of cardboard, which made it light in weight and delicate. It was always shown hanging in the air, like a kite or a balloon, or as if it were floating on water. This particular piece was crushed when a workman fell on it in 1968, and the collector then returned it to me for repairs.

In rebuilding the cardboard plug, I became interested in the subject again. A larger wooden version was built, which served as a model for the first metal plug, executed at Lippincott. The metal plug was as different from the original construction as could be imagined, especially when I allowed it to follow its natural tendency and sink into the ground.

It is as if the object is going through a series of "impressions": now a balloon, now a nut, now an anchor, now a cannon—but always retaining its basic shape and identity as a Three-Way Plug. . . .

The Three-Way Plug is a rounded shape, related to the earth and half buried, becomes a part of the earth. It behaves like an implement left over from a war, returning to nature. It seems siteable anywhere, as if it had fallen out of the sky, like an acorn or an apple or a meteor.

*Claes Oldenburg
From the exhibition catalogue*

Left: *Three-Way Plug—Scale B (soft)*, 1970
Height 62". Collection of the Artist
(Photograph by Malcolm Lubliner)

Reverse: Claes Oldenburg with his *Giant Three-Way Plug*, 1969-70, at the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio
(Photograph by Hannah Wilke)



875

CLAES OLDENBURG

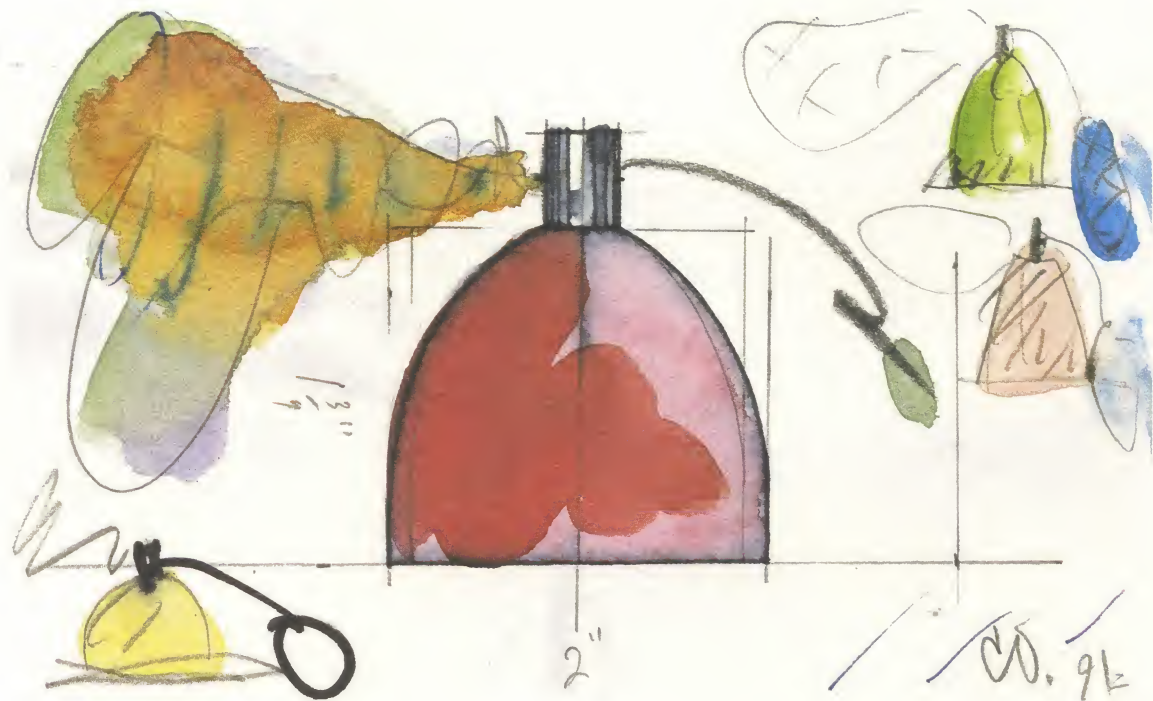
ARTIST'S FILE



IRVING BLUM GALLERY

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA







Claes Oldenburg: An Anthology

National Gallery of Art, Washington

February 12 - May 7, 1995



FIGURE 1:

Symbolic Self-Portrait with Equals, 1969, Moderna Museet, Stockholm

While he ostensibly concentrates on the inanimate, the artist has not ignored the human form as a subject for sculpture. But he reaches the body through the medium of ordinary objects, what he calls "the detached examination of human beings through form." It is Oldenburg's ingenious, and often hilarious, aptitude for causing objects to function subtly as surrogates for the human body that is among the most salient and evocative aspects of his oeuvre.

Oldenburg was born in 1929 in Stockholm, the son of a Swedish diplomat who brought him to the United States as an infant, settling for a time in New York but moving eventually to Chicago. After attending Yale University from 1946 to 1950, Oldenburg returned to Chicago where he worked as a cub newspaper reporter and took courses at the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1956 he moved to New York City where he came into contact with a number of artists, including Allan Kaprow, Red Grooms, and Jim Dine, whose theatrically based art posed an alternative to the prevailing influence of abstract expressionist painting. The radical experiments of these artists involved the creation of environments for their performances, called "happenings," which were partly scripted, partly spontaneous theatrical events that, according to Oldenburg, broke down "barriers between the arts and something close to an actual experience." Situating objects within an environment, sometimes created as a context for theater, has been a mainstay of Oldenburg's artistic approach to the present day.

Oldenburg's first important work on an environmental scale was "The Street," which reflected the artist's direct experience of the gritty life in the slums of Chicago and New York (fig. 2). Installed consecutively in two New York galleries in 1960, "The Street" was created from readily available urban detritus such as cardboard and burlap. As the artist says, "a refuse lot in the city is worth all the art stores in the

world." Oldenburg tore large figures and fragmented shapes from the cardboard, which he then painted and placed around the gallery, leaning them on walls or suspending them from the ceiling. The ragged-edged forms were like drawings in space or "rips out of reality" that the artist envisioned as part of a vast "metaphoric mural" of the city. The deliberately crude execution and vulgar materials of "The Street" were due in part to the example of French artist Jean Dubuffet, who drew inspiration from the untutored art of children and from the insane. Ultimately, however, they evolved from the city itself, as the artist has explained: "The drawing at this time takes on an 'ugliness' which is a mimicry of the scrawls and patterns of street graffiti. It celebrates irrationality, violence, and stunted expression—the damaged life forces of the city street."

Oldenburg's well-known installation of "The Store" was first presented at a New York gallery in 1961 and then expanded in a Lower East Side storefront gallery that the artist occupied as a studio. "The Store" was filled floor to ceiling with sculpture constructed of muslin that had been dipped in plaster, placed over a wire framework, and painted with several layers of loosely applied, brightly colored commercial paint. These sensuously textured objects were executed on multiple scales and represented merchandise from local neighborhood shops—cafeteria foods, fragments of advertisements, women's underwear, or little girls' dresses (fig. 3). "Look for beauty where it is not supposed to be found," Oldenburg commented in one of his diaristic notebooks. In the storefront shop the artist functioned as both manufacturer and purveyor of his sculptures, which together formed a veritable landscape of the city. This early installation underscored the fundamentally democratic nature of Oldenburg's art, one that was integrated directly into the community, thereby circumventing a conventional gallery situation.

In 1963 Oldenburg left New York and relocated in Venice, California, for about seven months. There he developed a group of related works centered around the theme of



FIGURE 2:

"The Street" being installed at the Reuben Gallery, New York, 1960



FIGURE 3:
Two Girls' Dresses, 1961, Collection Reinhard Onnasch, Berlin

"The Home," including household appliances, bathroom fixtures, and bedroom furniture. Once he returned to New York, Oldenburg had fabricated a fully furnished, life-size bedroom inspired by a California motel he had seen as a teenager, in which each fantasy suite was thematically decorated with a different animal skin (fig. 4). With "The Bedroom" Oldenburg moved from the cluttered spaces and lumpy, hand-wrought forms of "The Store," which he associated with downtown New York, to clean, hard-edged, manufactured surfaces that conveyed an aesthetic he associated with California.

The non-functional bed, sofa, and vanity are made of artificial materials such as formica and faux animal-skin vinyl. Pseudo "Jackson Pollocks" hang on either side of the room. The furniture is actually a distortion of its real counterpart, for the pieces are built on an angle, forming rhomboid shapes that both reinforce and contradict a sense of deep perspective. In Oldenburg's re-creation "The Bedroom" becomes a tableau about "geometry, abstraction, rationality," and the artist suggests that "the effect is intensified by using the softest room in the house and the one least associated with conscious thought." This sculptural group demonstrates the formal continuity that characterizes Oldenburg's work, for he has maintained that while the objects in "The Street" speak to his concerns about line and plane, those in "The Store" deal with color, and those in "The Bedroom" and, more broadly, "The Home" explore volume. By concentrating on highly abstracted, industrially manufactured forms, Oldenburg adopted some of the formal and conceptual approaches of his contemporaries who were making abstract sculpture in the 1960s. He has said that "The Bedroom" was an attempt "to find a common ground between the minimalist experiment and what I wanted to do, furniture."

Oldenburg's earliest soft sculpture originated as props for his performances, such as "World's Fair II," presented in "The Store" in 1962. At New York's Green Gallery later that year the artist exhibited soft versions of a hamburger, a slice

of cake, and an ice-cream cone, all executed on a giant scale in painted canvas sewn by his first wife Pat Muschinski (now Mucha). Just before moving to California in 1963, Oldenburg discovered vinyl and soon was making soft sculpture sewn from this shiny, versatile material, which he stuffed with foam rubber and other fillers. Before executing a soft sculpture in vinyl, however, the artist first created a work such as *Soft Toilet*, 1967 (fig. 5), as a "hard" prototype in painted cardboard, then as a "ghost" version in stuffed white canvas. The malleable, fluid surfaces of the soft sculpture resist fixed formal definition. Their contours exist in a state of flux, shifting according to the gradual pressures of gravity or the force of immediate physical manipulation. As Oldenburg has said, their pliant forms are in part self-determining: "I give in to forces, psychological and natural, and let them make themselves, guiding them as they develop."

As hard objects metamorphose into Oldenburg's flaccid shapes, a kind of organic decomposition takes place that implies the vulnerability of human flesh. *Soft Toilet* makes manifest the artist's capacity for conflating hard objects with the morphology of the body, its functions, and its rituals. By softening rigid forms, he creates visual paradoxes that defy our perceptions about the commonplace and endow the object with a new, sensual, and ultimately erotic reality. Like their physical properties, the identities of the soft sculptures are mutable, unstable: "It is important to me that a work of art be constantly elusive, mean many different things to many different people. My work is always on its way between one point and another. What I care most about is its living possibilities."

In 1965, following an extended European trip, Oldenburg returned to New York and moved into a large loft where he began to make drawings of common objects as monuments. More than any other postwar artist, Oldenburg has created large-scale, public sculptures that challenge traditional functions and forms of monuments while standing as symbols of civic identity and pride. By proposing everyday objects on a colossal scale, he has called into question the



FIGURE 4:
Bedroom Ensemble, 1964-1995, Collection of Claes Oldenburg
and Coosje van Bruggen, New York



FIGURE 5:

***Soft Toilet*, 1966, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
50th Anniversary Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Victor W. Ganz**

time-honored sentiment that public monuments must commemorate historical figures and events. Oldenburg has designed and built "feasible" monuments, but he has also produced scores of drawings and collages proposing "non-feasible" monuments, which are fantasies impossible to realize—such as a giant pair of moving scissors to replace the Washington Monument or a colossal fan to replace the Statue of Liberty. A supremely gifted draftsman, Oldenburg is well equipped to give form to his imaginative schemes. Drawing, he has said, is "the accidental ability to coordinate your fantasy with your hand."

Oldenburg first envisioned a sculpture of giant tubes of lipstick in 1966. Designed to replace a Fountain of Eros in London's Piccadilly Circus, the lipstick forms would rise and fall inside their tubes with the tides of the Thames River. Like many of the artist's forms, however, the lipstick could be adapted to different settings and functions. *Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Tracks* (fig. 6), Oldenburg's first actual monument in an outdoor setting, was commissioned by graduate architecture students of Yale University where it was installed (on Ascension Day) in 1969. Oldenburg placed the lipstick on a tank-shaped base inspired by caterpillar tractors and rolls of cardboard he had seen near Lippincott Inc., a foundry in nearby North Haven. Strategically sited before the staid classical columns of a World War I memorial on Yale's campus, *Lipstick (Ascending)* constituted a subversive alternative to both conventional monuments and war machines, for its missile-shaped lipstick was initially made of soft material that would slowly deflate until someone wishing to speak from the sculpture platform pumped it up with air to attract attention. Like many of Oldenburg's sculptures, *Lipstick (Ascending)* in-



FIGURE 6:
Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Tracks, 1969, Yale University
Art Gallery, Gift of the Colossal Keepsake Corporation

corporates forms that are both male and female, while it explores themes of eros and death, power and desire. Originally constructed in part of perishable materials, the sculpture was entirely refabricated in metal by Lippincott Inc. in 1974. It is currently installed on the Fourth Street Plaza between the National Gallery's East and West Buildings.

The forty-five-foot *Clothespin*, installed in 1976 at Centre Square Plaza in downtown Philadelphia, was the artist's first "feasible" monument to be installed in an urban setting. Among his simplest and most elegant designs, the clothespin sculpture exists in several scales and has been constructed in canvas, cardboard, aluminum, bronze, and Cor Ten steel. A familiar object in the artist's studio ("nothing is irrelevant, everything can be used"), the clothespin struck him as a decidedly architectural form, particularly in relation to the curved walls of the enormous Hancock building he saw being erected in Chicago in 1967. In a drawing of that year Oldenburg employed the clothespin as a hypothetical proposal for the famous Chicago Tribune Architectural Competition of 1922 (fig. 7). At skyscraper scale, the spring of the clothespin would contain restaurants at either end. But like other Oldenburg objects, the clothespin can slip into different identities, and the artist has also envisioned the spring as the arms of two embracing figures: "My singleminded aim is to give existence to [my] fantasy."

The selection of the usually discredited and discarded objects of the world extends to those remembered from childhood fantasies, and Oldenburg's imagery may assume an outdated, old-fashioned appearance. The structure of these forms from the past and their overtones of nostalgia appeal to the artist. "Some things I am attracted to do not seem



FIGURE 7:
Late Submission to the Chicago Tribune Architectural Competition of 1922: Clothespin (Version Two), 1967, Des Moines Art Center, Gift of Gardner Cowles by exchange and partial gift of Charles Cowles



FIGURE 8:
Typewriter Eraser, 1976, From the Patsy R. and Raymond D. Nasher Collection, Dallas, Texas

to be liked enough," he has observed, "By choosing to re-make them, I may help them. I wish the best for all things."

As a child playing in his father's workplace, one of Oldenburg's favorite office supplies was a typewriter eraser, a lowly object he has since made the subject of drawings, prints, and hard and soft sculpture. Oldenburg has envisioned the typewriter eraser as a figure, an octopus, a medusa, or even a tornado in Texas ("erasing" a path across the landscape). In 1970 he proposed a bent eraser, a "fine, anti-heroic subject," as a feasible monument for 57th Street in New York. The eraser, Oldenburg felt, was the kind of object that might fall to the street from office buildings. His proposal was rejected, but Oldenburg continued to experiment with new configurations for the eraser. In a version from 1976 that was fabricated by the Lippincott foundry (fig. 8), a giant falling eraser has just alighted, the bristles of the brush turned upward in a graceful, dynamic gesture, "like a wheel with a wing."

Oldenburg's ability to visualize a single form in many guises is one of the creative wellsprings of his art. In his *Symbolic Self-Portrait with Equals* (fig. 1), the artist surrounds his own image with diagrammatic drawings of some of his most familiar objects—a good humor bar, an electric light switch, a three-way plug (seen from two angles), and a geometric mouse head. By constructing these images from elemental geometric shapes, Oldenburg creates analogous forms as if by simple mutation, thereby linking seemingly unrelated subjects by subtle visual correspondences. The artist has commented on the formal consonance of his imagery: "The rhyme element in my work is based on the fact that every work is reducible to a simple form or a few simple forms."

Since 1976 Oldenburg has been collaborating with his wife, the art historian and author Coosje van Bruggen, on a series of large-scale outdoor projects. The two have left their indelible mark on twenty-six cityscapes in Europe and the United States, including Las Vegas, Des Moines, Miami, and Rotterdam. Their installations of colossal sculpture based on commonplace objects, be it a flashlight, an umbrella, or, most recently, giant badminton shuttlecocks, involve, according to Germano Celant, the curator of this exhibition, "a flow of metaphors and allegories around the essence of a site." Many of these large-scale projects are presented in the current exhibition through drawings, small-scale models, and slides.

In 1985 Oldenburg and van Bruggen, together with the American architect Frank Gehry, presented a performance in Venice, Italy, "Il Corso del Coltello" ("The Course of the Knife"). The centerpiece of the performance was the *Knife Ship I*, a sculpture in the form of a giant Swiss Army Knife equipped with a corkscrew, blades, and oars that move. As the performance in Venice took place, the *Knife Ship I* floated like a gigantic apparition along the Arsenale canal (fig. 9), suggesting a bizarre incarnation of an ancient ceremonial ship. The collaborators donned costumes (Oldenburg performed as Dr. Coltello, or Marco Polo reduced to a souvenir salesman; van Bruggen was Georgia Sandbag, George Sand in the contem-



FIGURE 9:
Claes Oldenburg, Coosje van Bruggen, Frank Gehry, *Knife Ship I*, 1985, during performance of "Il Corso del Coltello," GFT USA Corp., New York



FIGURE 10:
Props and Costumes for "Il Corso del Coltello," 1986, Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, Phoenix, Maryland

porary guise of an itinerant travel agent) and engaged in dialogue about art and architecture, culture and life. The elaborate production recalled both the Italian tradition of *commedia dell'arte* and theatrical events staged by Oldenburg in the 1960s. The performance was documented through a film that will be shown at the Gallery and through Oldenburg's lively sketches in charcoal and pastel (fig. 10). The *Knife Ship I* has been installed at the Gallery on the mezzanine level, along with props and costumes from "The Course of the Knife."

For the last decade Oldenburg has concentrated on large-scale outdoor projects and on a series of major indoor installations, including the "Haunted House," "Entropic Library," and "European Desk Top," all of which have been created with Coosje van Bruggen. He has also made a suite of sculpture based on musical instruments and has occasionally returned to food subjects, as in the recent work, *Leaning Fork with Meatball and Spaghetti I*, 1994 (cover). Like many of Oldenburg's objects, this eleven-foot-tall sculpture does not rest squarely on a pedestal. Rather, it leans precariously against the wall, the solid form of the meatball perched "Atlas-like" atop a slender and sinuous fork. The spaghetti mass threatens to loosen and fall, implying processes of change and decomposition, themes for which Oldenburg has frequently sought formal equivalents. In *Leaning Fork*, what are arguably the most familiar and intimate of forms take on astonishing dimensions and implications: "I am preoccupied," Oldenburg has explained, "with the possibility of creating art which functions in a public situation without compromising its private character of being anti-heroic, anti-monumental, anti-abstract, and anti-general. The paradox is intensified by the use on a grand scale of small-scale subjects known from intimate situations—an approach which tends in turn to reduce the scale of the real landscape to imaginary dimensions."





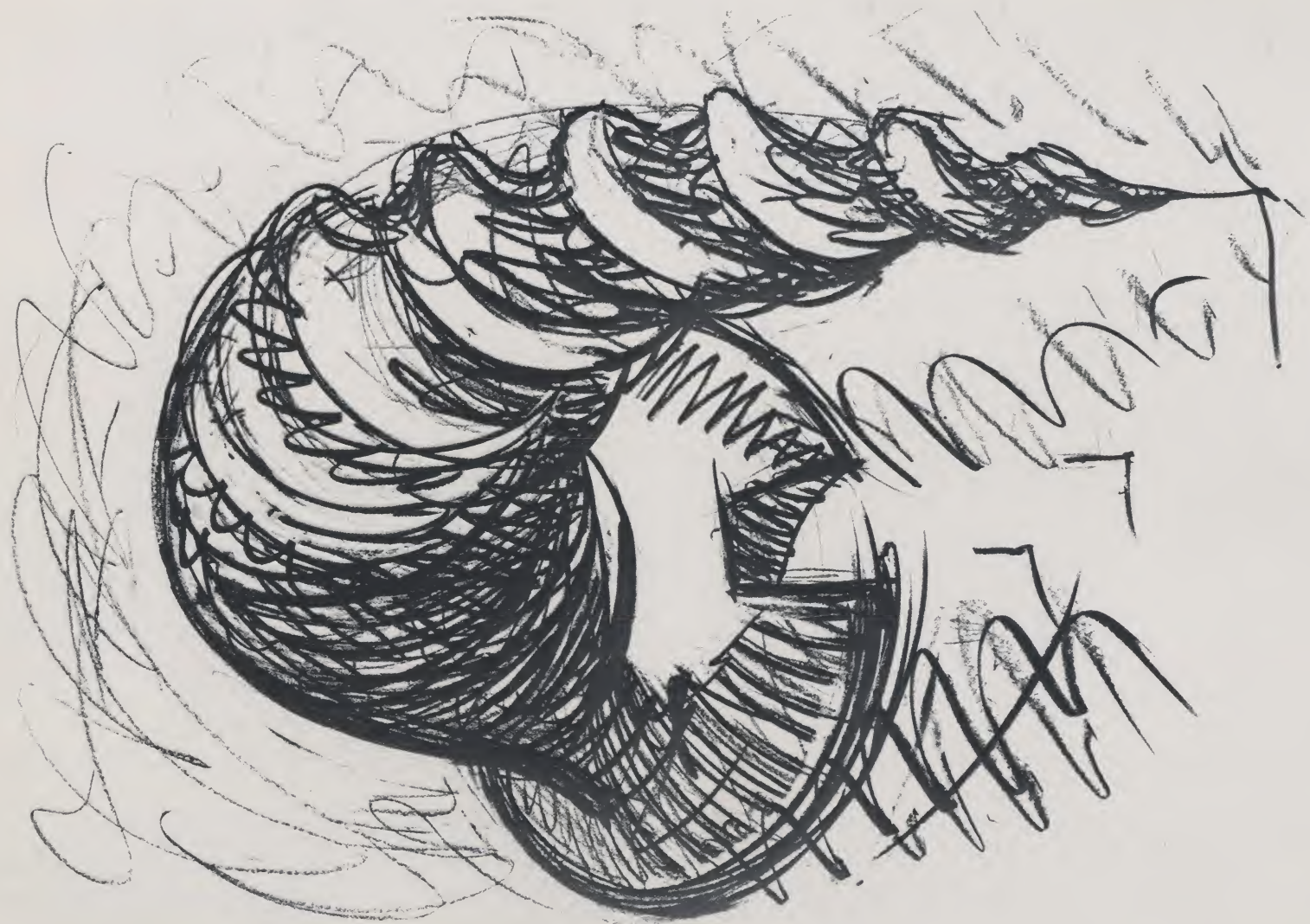


CLAES OLDENBURG AT GEMINI

20th Cent.



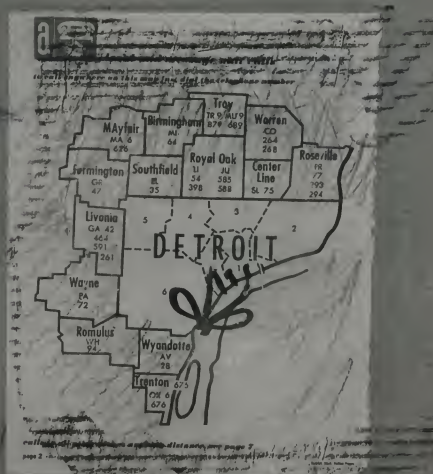




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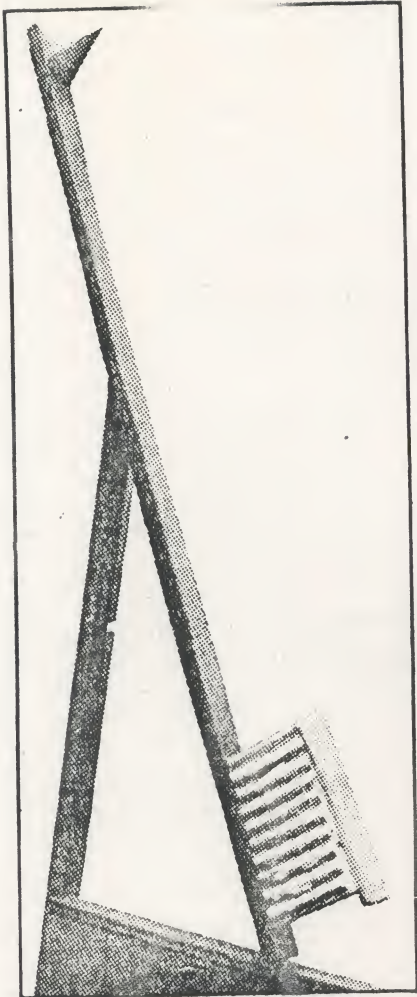


✓ Claes Oldenburg
Pastry Case, I. 1962

The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection

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Model of the proposed sculpture

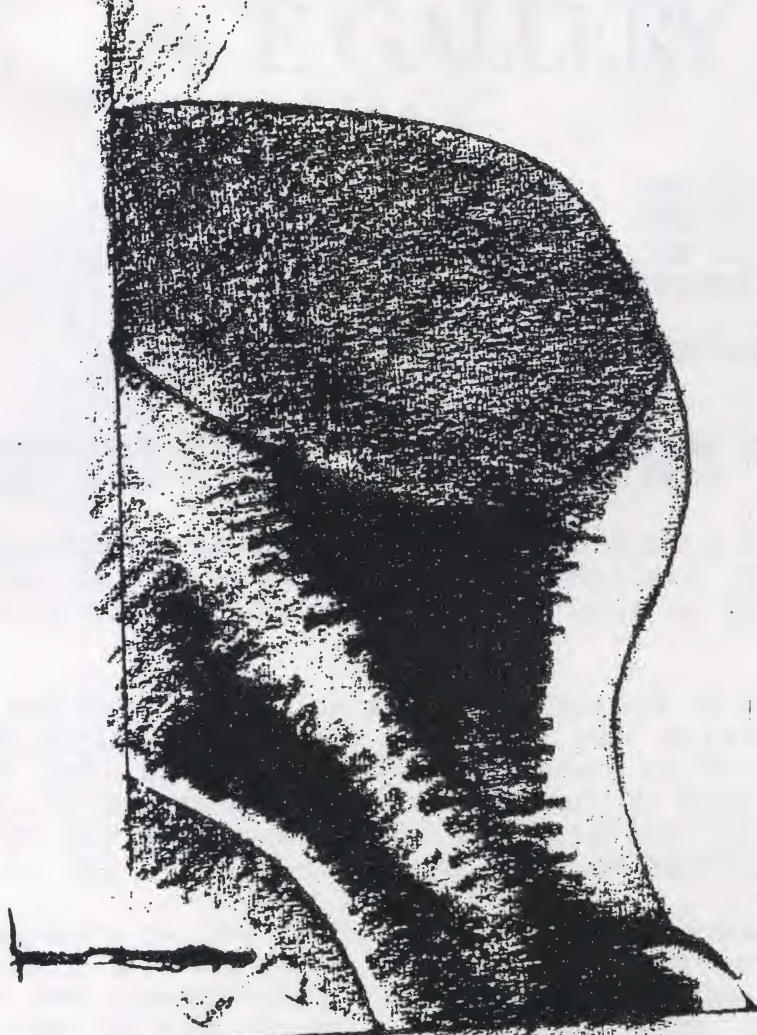
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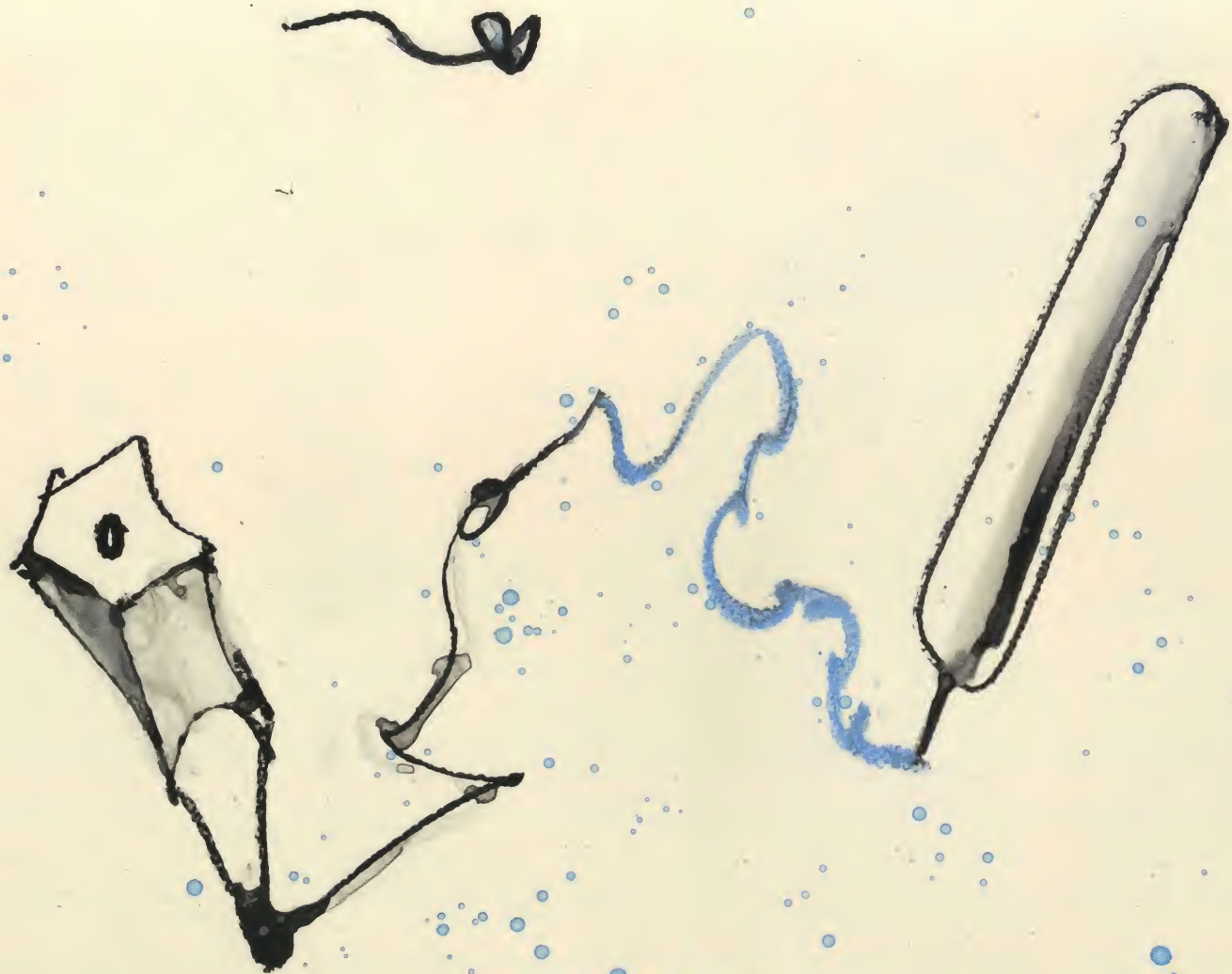
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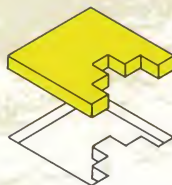
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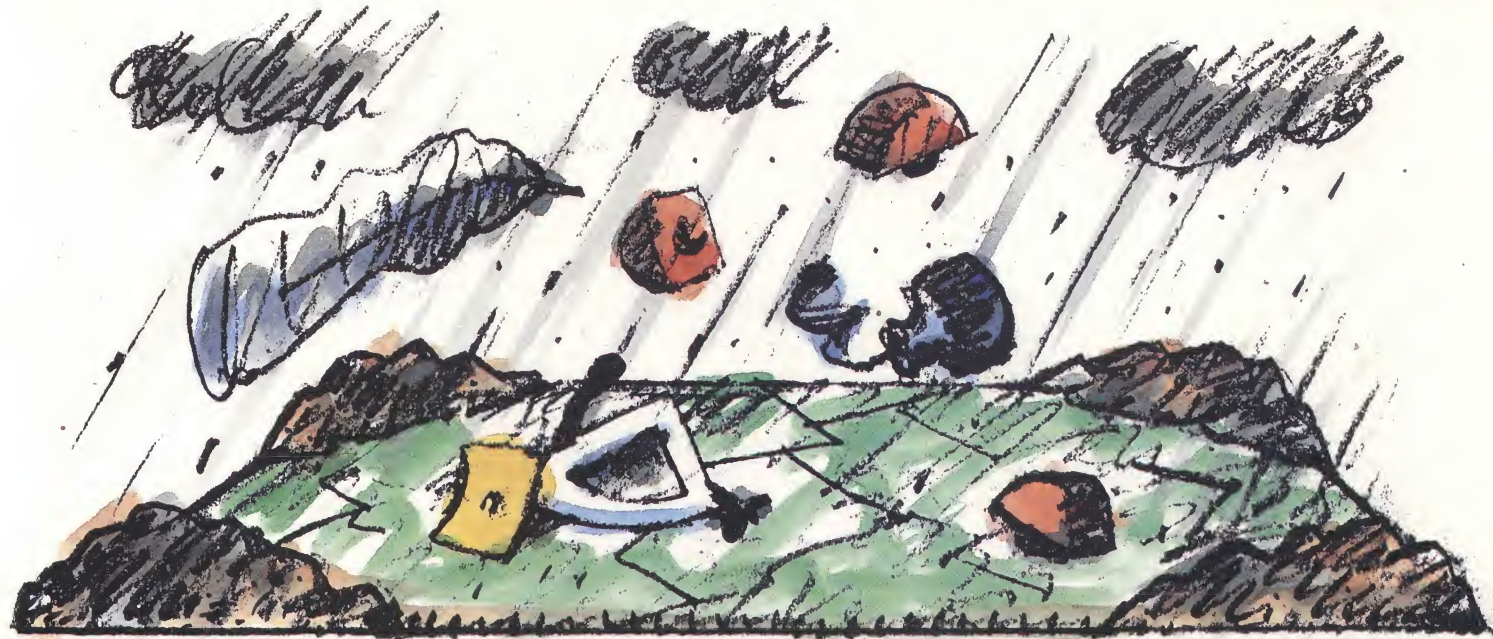
Claes OLDENBURG
Multiples 1964 - 1990

Du 17 mars au 26 avril 1993

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MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE
SAINT-ETIENNE





albicinctus / pectus albicinctus

Albicinctus
1887

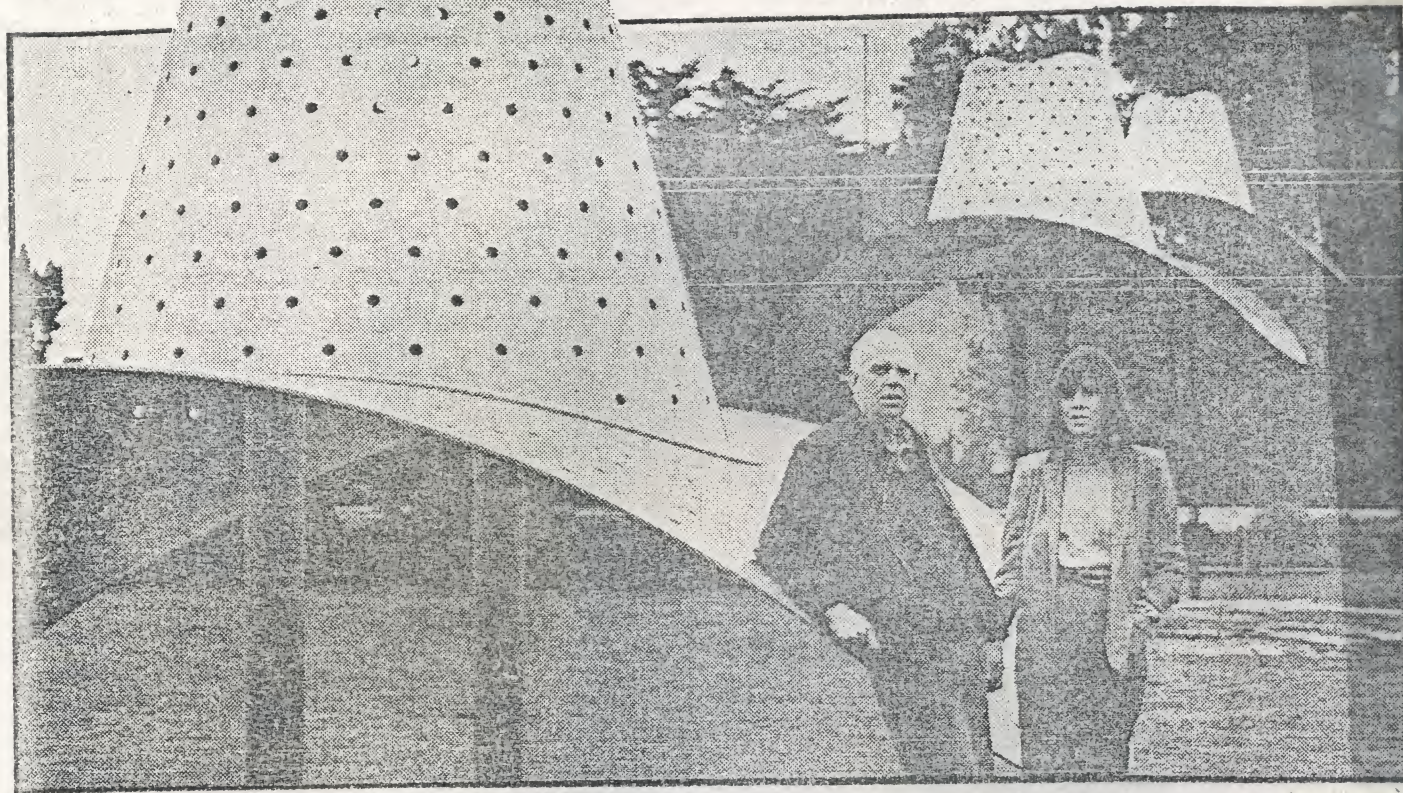


The Knife Ship

by the artist of the same name

CALENDAR

ART

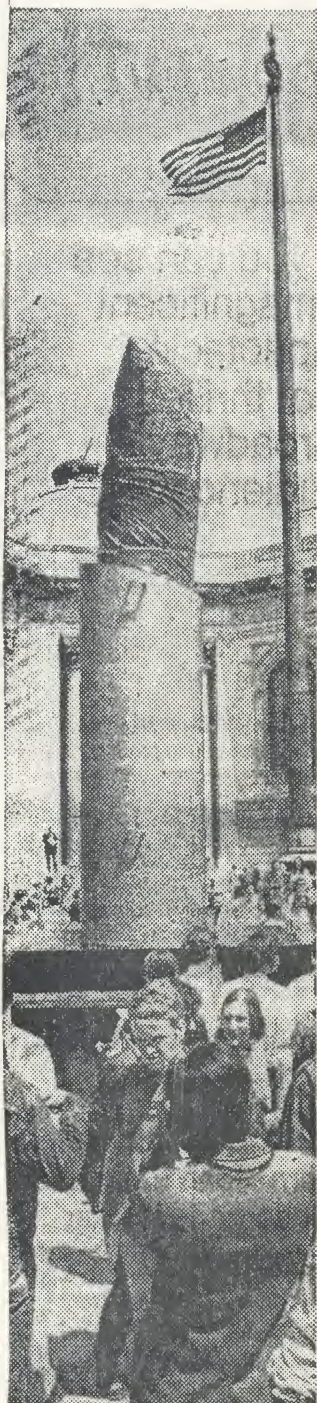


ROBERT KAUFMAN

OLDENBURGS HANG THEIR HATS IN SALINAS

OLDENBURG, CLAES

ONE-MAN



The New York Times

The "lipstick" in place on Beinecke Plaza, Yale campus.

Oldenburg Hopes His Art Will Make Imprint at Yale

By JOHN DARNTON

Special to The New York Times

NEW HAVEN, May 15—Claes Oldenburg, the pop artist, who has given the world the giant plaster hamburger and the soft typewriter, came to Yale today and left what he hopes will be a permanent landmark. Whether the university hoped so is another matter.

With the help of more than two dozen grunting, sweating students from the School of Art and Architecture, a 24-foot-tall, 3,500-pound "monument" was deposited in Beinecke Plaza, in the heart of the campus. It was in the form of a giant lipstick mounted on a caterpillar base.

The art work, the first in Mr. Oldenburg's "monument series" was donated to Yale by students and artists who raised more than \$6,000 to pay for it.

"It's a gift. They must be gracious," said Mr. Oldenburg as he surveyed the construction through pink-tinted sunglasses. The artist, who was clad in a trench coat with a plum-purple striped shirt, said he had contributed his labor free and placed the value of the work at between \$8,000 and \$9,000. "As monuments go it's relatively inexpensive," he said.

Fund for the project were solicited through a corporation set up for the purpose. A proviso of the gift is that if it is rejected or removed from its present site—with the exception of twice a year, for not more than 72 hours, to make repairs—ownership reverts to the corporation. The monument would then be donated to another educational institution, namely Harvard.

More than 50 students, faculty and alumni and friends of Yale contributed,

including the architects Philip Johnson, Charles Moore and James Stirling, the writer John Hersey, and Christopher Tunnard, city planner; Paul Weiss, philosopher, and Vincent Scully, art historian.

"Our purpose is to make the arts more relevant to the world," said Stuart Wrede, a graduate student in architecture who conceived the project last summer. Others, however, refrained from ideological statements, or simply pointed to the Beinecke Rare Book Library, whose architectural features a number of students object to.

"Beinecke Plaza isn't a very human thing. This will humanize it," said William Goodrich, a lawyer for the corporation.

The sponsors of the project said it had no direct connection with recent unrest at the School of Art and Architecture, where students have been pressing for financial equality and scholarships with other graduate schools. Monday President Kingman Brewster Jr., whose window is within 40 feet of the monument, promised the students increased aid.

The monument was to be set up without the knowledge of the administration. However, 200 students were on hand at 12:30 P.M. as two trucks, carrying the parts of the monument, and a motorcycle escort arrived.

The work, titled "Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Track," comprises a large aluminum tube of three interlocking sections that rises from a 13-by-14-foot track base. It is capped by a bright pink vinyl top that was sewn together by wives of the members of the monument corporation.

The students applauded as each section was removed



Claes Oldenburg

from the trucks and assembled in a smooth teamwork operation. As one student barked directions—"Lift!" "Hold!"—and as the others labored in a scene that at times resembled the raising of the flag on Iwo Jima, Mr. Oldenburg stood by nervously. When he climbed a stepladder and inserted a tube to inflate the vinyl, a roar went up from the crowd.

If the gift is accepted, Mr. Oldenburg said, a more permanent lipstick made of Fiberglas will replace the vinyl, which was already beginning to sag.

Several students commented on the erotic nature of the sculpture. In a leaflet handed out today, Mr. Oldenburg cleared up this interpretation: "The subject is not erotic—a motor car, which it resembles, is equally erotic. It also suggests an Ionic column (upside down), a Chicago fire plug, a drain pipe, or the famous tower of Tatlin for Red Square—the model of which I recently saw set up in the parking lot of Houston's Rice University."

Oldenburg Lipstick Rejoins Yale With Cosmetic Repairs

By GRACE GLUECK

Special to The New York Times

NEW HAVEN, Conn., Oct. 18—To music, speeches and some exuberant student shenanigans, a peripatetic monument made a comeback on the campus of Yale University last night.

Newly refurbished and looking formidably kissproof, a giant lipstick designed by Claes Oldenburg and first installed at Yale in 1969 was uncased on a new site, a courtyard of Morse College here.

Kingman Brewster, Yale's president, who reportedly is not captivated by the lipstick's esthetic appeal, was not on hand for the ceremony. But a large crowd of students, a number of the male ones sporting lipstick themselves, came to cheer, heckle, applaud and, in one case, to shinny up the sleek, steel-and-glass fiber structure, which stands 24 feet high.

"It's a great event. The first time, we didn't have music," said Mr. Oldenburg, who, with rousing accompaniment by the Yale University Band, addressed the crowd in his stocking feet from a perch on the lipstick's base. "I'm taking off my shoes to demonstrate that the piece should be treated with some respect since, among other things, you'll find it useful as a speaking platform. And I hope you'll take your shoes off when you do."

Not a Total Joy

In its short lifespan of five years, the structure has not only been through several physical stages but it also has acquired something of a history. Taking the form of an open lipstick case mounted on a tractor base, it was originally designed for Yale in 1968 by Mr. Oldenburg, a Yale alumnus, on commission from a student-faculty group known as the Colossal Keepsake Corporation. The corporation members, mainly associated with the School of Architecture, at the time a seat of student protest activi-



David Pearlman leading band at comeback ceremony

ties, raised some \$5,000 to pay for the lipstick's creation.

The gift was unannounced to the Yale administration until its installation in May, 1969, on Beinecke Plaza, the hub of the university. Though its sponsors denied that their intention was political, it was seen at the time by many students as an anti-war monument and also a refreshing dig at Yale's stuffiness, both architectural and social.

But Yale officials, who never formally "accepted" the gift, shifted the work several times from its cen-

tral spot on the plaza, and students began to adorn it with posters and graffiti. Moreover, the structure at the time was something less than weatherproof — with wooden tractor treads that soon began to warp.

In March, 1970, Mr. Oldenburg ordered it removed to the Lippincott metal foundry in nearby North Haven, where it had been originally fabricated. Left out of doors, it continued to weather, its metal parts rusting badly. No one believed the lipstick would survive.

But in 1971, a revival movement began, spearheaded by Vincent Scully, and Sheldon Nodelman of Yale's art history faculty. The two, joined by Theodore Stebbins, curator of American paintings and sculpture at the Yale Art Gallery, approached Alan Shestack, the gallery's director, to help retrieve the outcast work.

In 1972, Mr. Shestack circulated a letter to Yale officials and the masters of Yale's twelve colleges asking for site suggestions for the work. "We are talking about a major sculpture by a major artist, which was stimulated in the first place by Yale students," he wrote. But the letter got a cool reception, with one college master informing Mr. Shestack that some practical joker had circulated a letter about the sculpture over his forged signature.

Things took a turn for the better after Mr. Scully's return from a European sabbatical in 1973, when he resumed his post as master of Morse College. Negotiations with Mr. Oldenburg, who was initially reluctant to return the work, began in earnest; at the same time a strong nibble of interest came from Smith College. But a canvassing of Morse students brought a largely affirmative response and the original members of the Colossal Keepsake Corporation voted to donate the work to the Yale Art Gallery.

With the gallery making a permanent loan of the work to Morse, the lipstick was restructured by Lippincott, at a reported cost of \$14,000. (Mr. Oldenburg himself donated a lithograph edition of the Lipstick, with the proceeds of its sale to provide a permanent fund for maintenance.) And so the sculpture, with its new tractor base of Cor-Ten steel, its gold casing, and its Tangee-like tip of glowing orange, now stands in Mr. Scully's front yard, a triangular patch of stone paving before his living quarters at Morse.

Yesterday, as the setting sun glistened off the lipstick's tip, and his small daughter romped barefoot with friends on the structure's platform, Mr. Scully, an art and architectural historian, took a long, admiring look at it.

"You notice how that orange color brings down the blue of the sky?" he said. "And how the form makes you read the verticals of the Morse tower while knocking the others around it into space?"

'Very Uplifting'

At the ceremony, Mr. Scully told the assembled crowd that the lipstick was "the most beautiful thing I've ever seen." Mr. Shestack noted, "We hope this time the lipstick will be with us for a longer period than before, and treated with the respect it deserves." A student responded from the crowd, "Don't smear it!"

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Photographs for The New York Times by JAMES MEEHAN
Claes Oldenburg, right, as his giant lipstick was uncased Thursday night in a yard at Morse College at Yale. The 24-foot work had been originally installed on Beinecke Plaza in May, 1969.





Claes Oldenburg's soft version of Picasso's Chicago Monument, at the Museum of Modern Art
Because it now seems unfair to separate the others from the matrix



Baked Potato Studies

3 colour lithograph 1971

37 x 44cm.

15 x 18"

Hodgkinson handmade paper

Edition 75 with 15 proofs

£450



Dance Costume, in the form

of fag end, with fallen dancer

3 colour lithograph 1971

44 x 37cm.

18 x 15"

Hodgkinson handmade paper

Edition 50 with 10 proofs

£450



Baked Potato with Butter

3 colour lithograph 1971

37 x 44cm.

15 x 18"

Hodgkinson handmade paper

Edition 75 with 15 proofs

£450

A selection of 12 of the images from the set of 50, each 15 x 11cm
(6 x 4") mounted on soft board 25 x 20cm (10 x 8")
Edition 100 with 20 proofs





Colossal Baked Potato in Landscape

8 colour lithograph 1972

78 x 103cm

31 x 40"

Hodgkinson handmade paper

Edition 100 with 20 proofs



Snare Drum

5 colour lithograph 1972

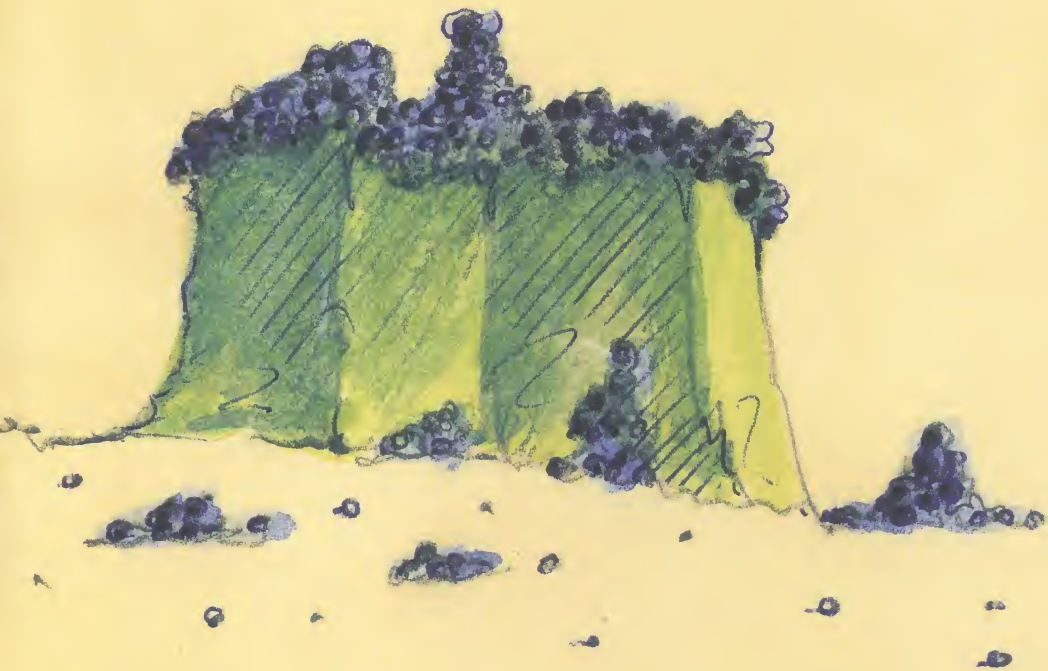
56 x 57cm

22 x 22½"

Hodgkinson handmade paper

Edition 50 with 10 proofs





carrot/avocado
mousse

Ch. Cor.



Soft Fireplug, Inverted
8 colour lithograph 1972
103 x 78cm
40 x 31"
Hodgkinson handmade paper
Edition 100 with 20 proofs



Tea Bag
7 colour lithograph 1972
79 x 58 cm
31 x 23"
Auvergne handmade paper
Edition 100 with 20 proofs



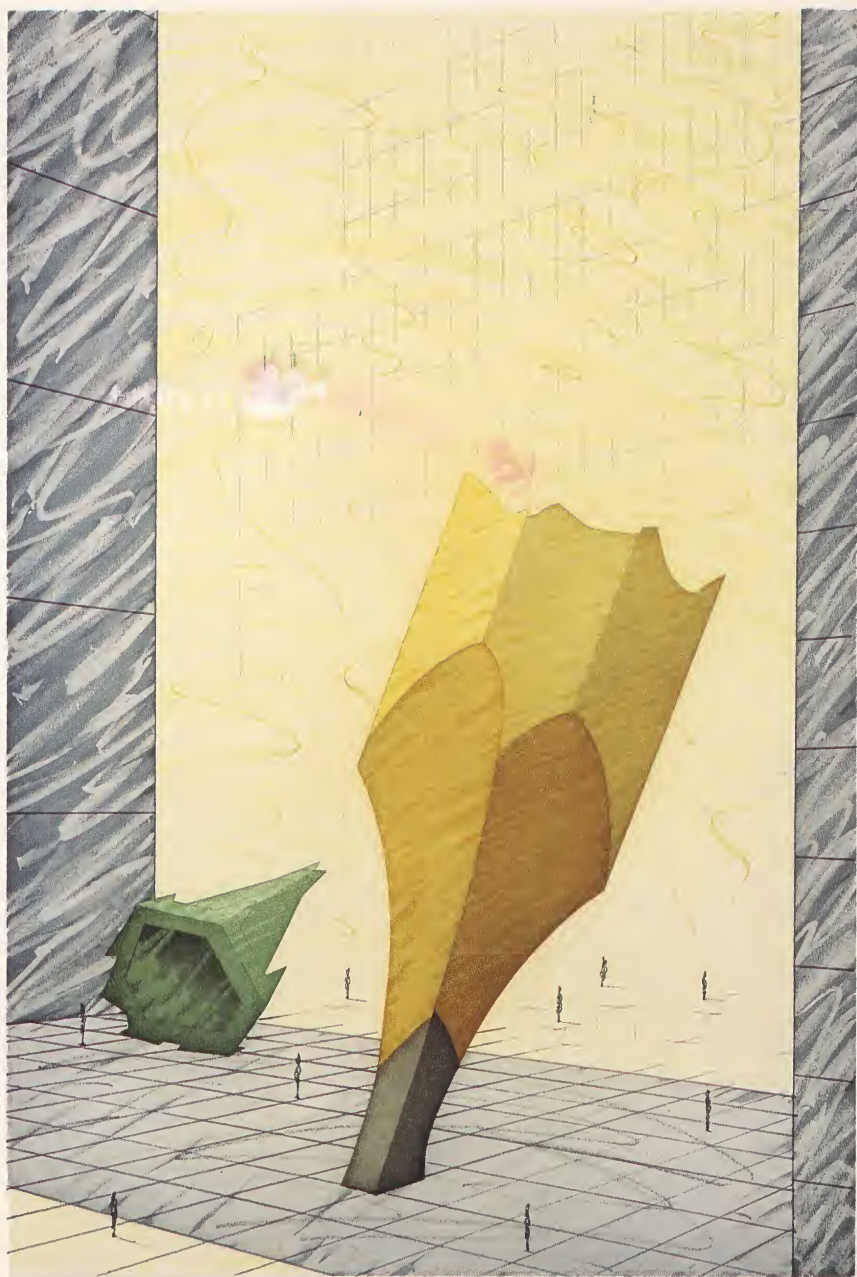
RAY GUN

COLOUR SCREENPRINT 1972
 MOULD MADE PAPER
 93 x 73 cm. (36 x 29 ins.)
 EDITION 250 WITH 25 PROOFS

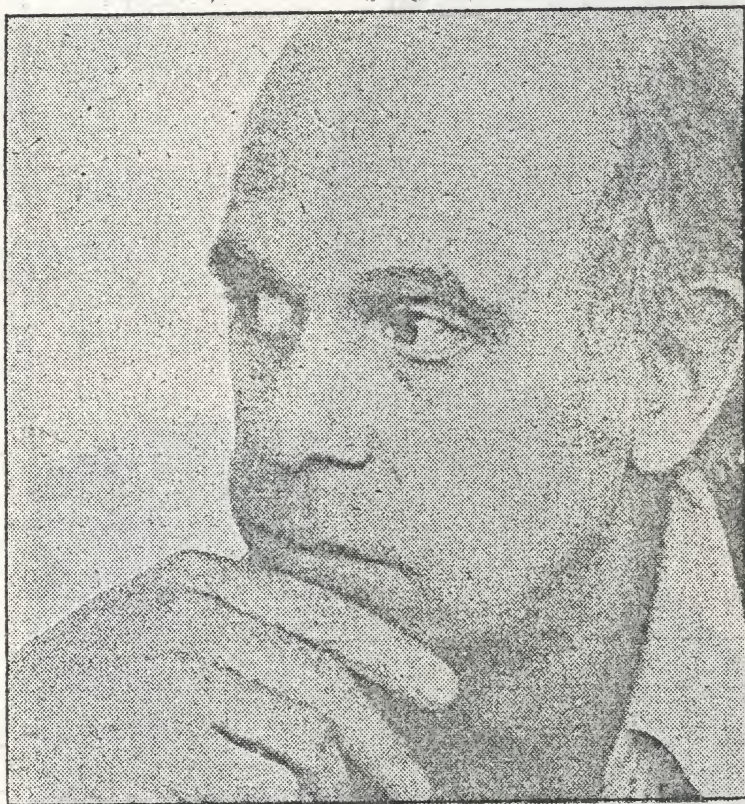


POSTER FOR PEACE

COLOUR SCREENPRINT 1972
 MOULD MADE PAPER
 73 x 55 cm. (29 x 22 ins.)
 EDITION 250 WITH 25 PROOFS

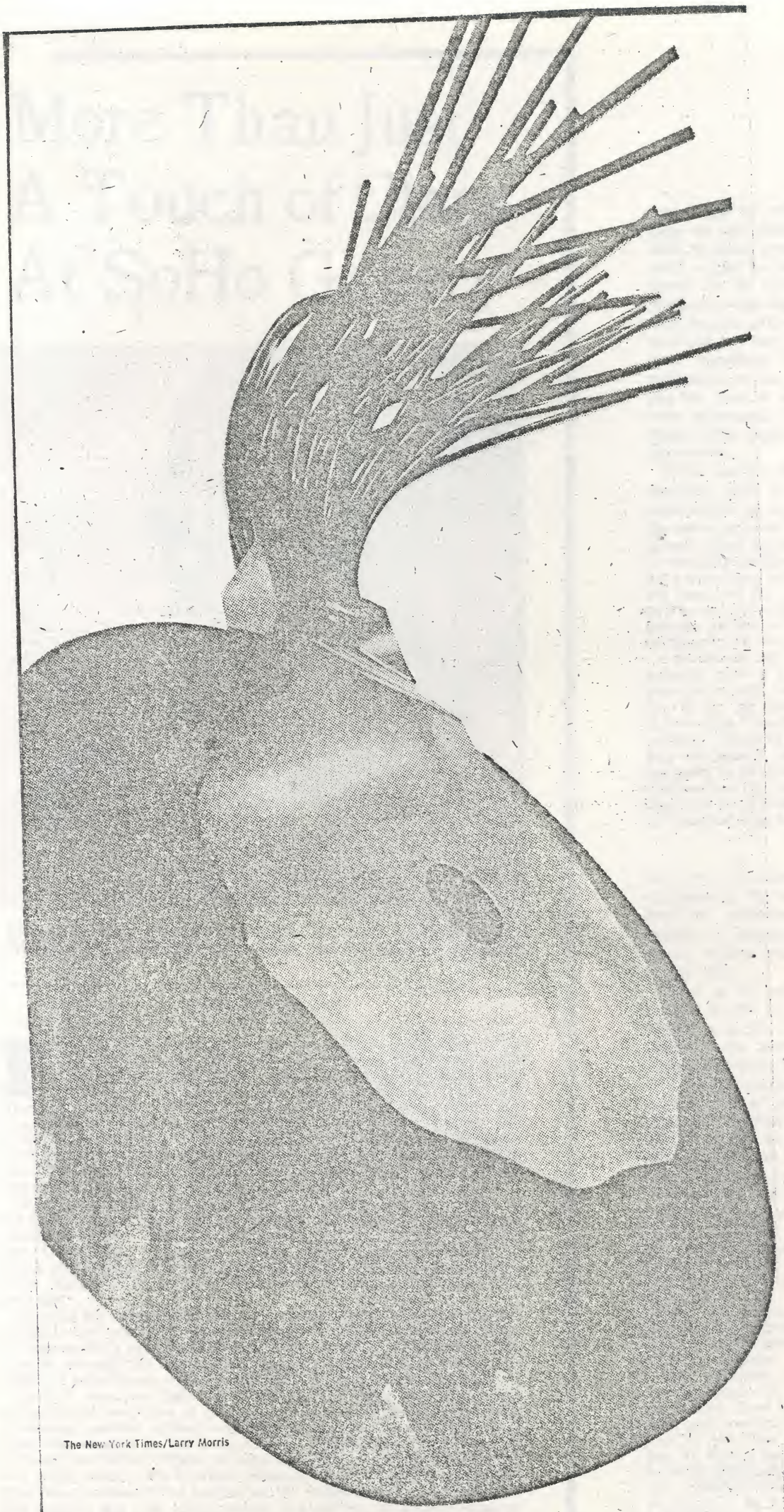


More Than Just A Touch of Claes At SoHo Gallery



The New York Times/James Meenan

Claes Oldenburg and his 3-foot typewriter eraser, which is on view at the Leo Castelli Gallery in SoHo: Has he softened his jokes?

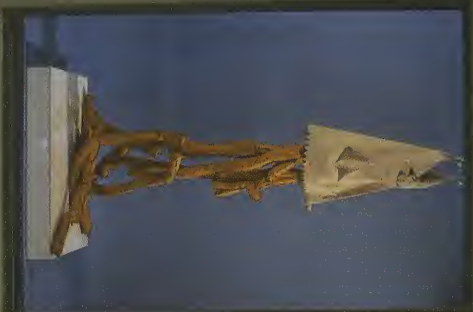




Claes Oldenburg
Shoestring Potatoes Spilling from a Bag, 1966
 Collection Walker Art Center
 Walker Art Center Slide Library, November 1998

Survival (flat stuff)
 Walker Art Center Library
 March 11 - May 22, 1999
 Rosemary Furtak, host
 Pierre Leguillon, medium
 Kirk McCall, project coordinator
 Conny Purtill, designer

PC Oldenburg, Claes
Shoestring Potatoes Spilling
from a Bag 1966



canvas, kapok, glue, acrylic
 108 x 46 x 42"
 WAC-PC 66.46

PC Oldenburg, Claes
Shoestring Potatoes Spilling
from a Bag 1966



canvas, kapok, glue, acrylic
 108 x 46 x 42"
 WAC-PC 66.46

Typewriter Eraser, 1976
Stainless steel, ferrocement, and aluminum, on steel base
89 x 90 x 63 inches
The Patsy R. and Raymond D. Nasber Collection, Dallas.

4262
Mr. Acting Director
Director
Los Angeles County Museum of Art

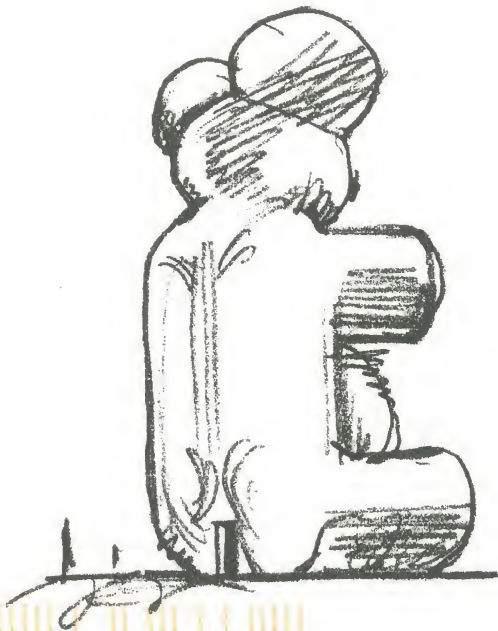


Claes Oldenburg

Small Sketches for Large Structures

9 January 1997 - 22 February 1997

Curated by David Platzker







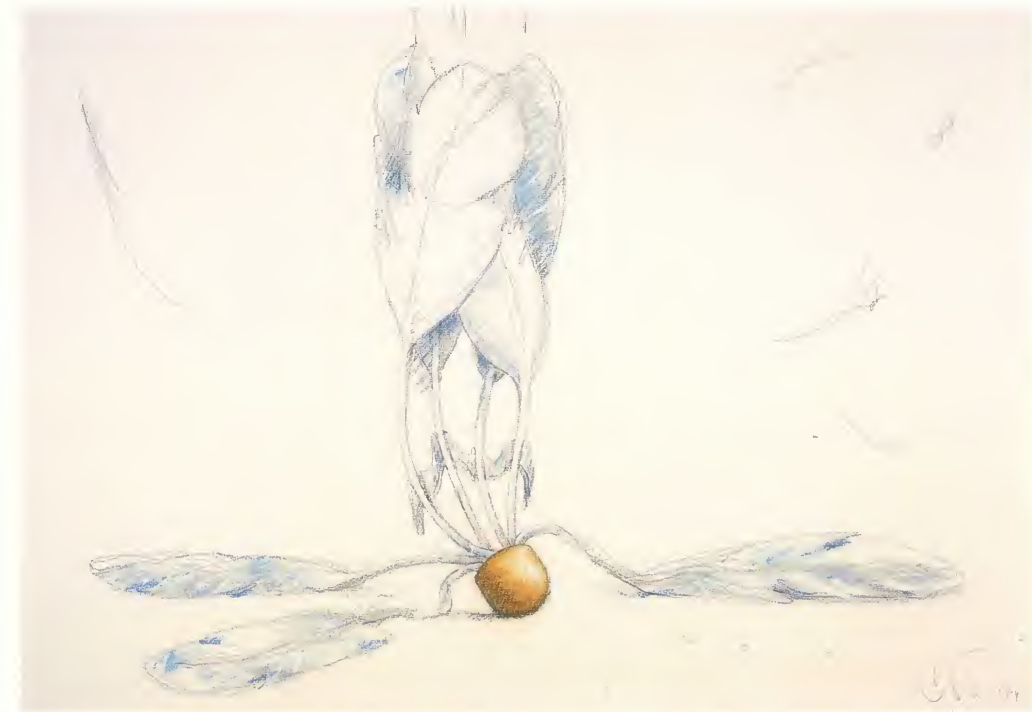
CLAES OLDENBURG COOSJE VAN BRUGGEN

Large-Scale Projects



◀ SOFT SHUTTLECOCK BEING RAISED, 1994, pencil and pastel on paper, 27 ⁵/₈ x 39 ¹/₂"

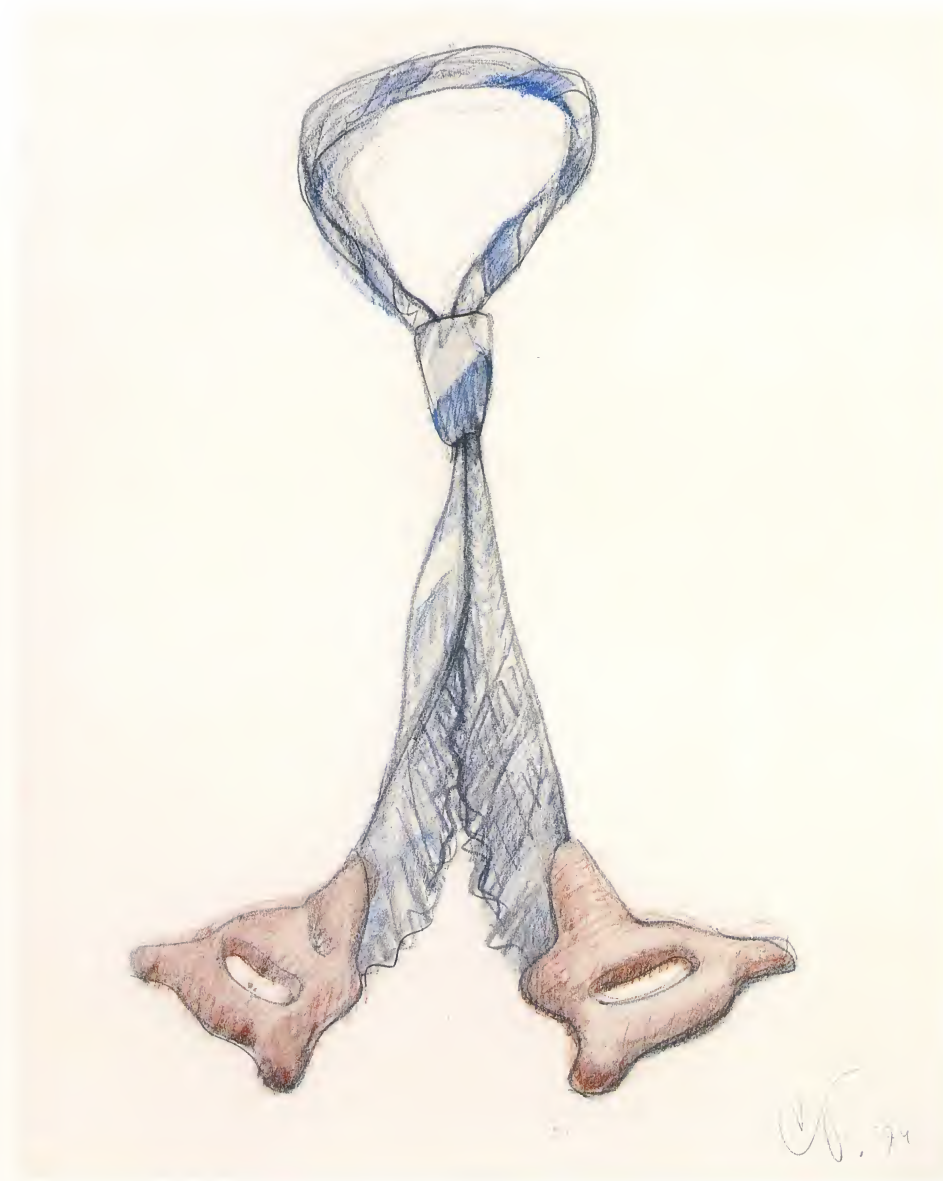
SOFT SHUTTLECOCK ON GROUND, 1994, pencil and pastel on paper, 27 ¹/₂ x 39 ¹/₄"



INVERTED COLLAR AND TIE, THIRD VERSION, 1993, canvas, resin, steel, foam and latex paint, 60 x 57 x 27" ▶▶

SAW / TIE, 1994, pencil and crayon on paper, 29 x 23" ▶

LEANING FORK WITH MEATBALL AND SPAGHETTI, STUDY, 1993, pencil and watercolor on paper, 8 1/2 x 5 1/2"





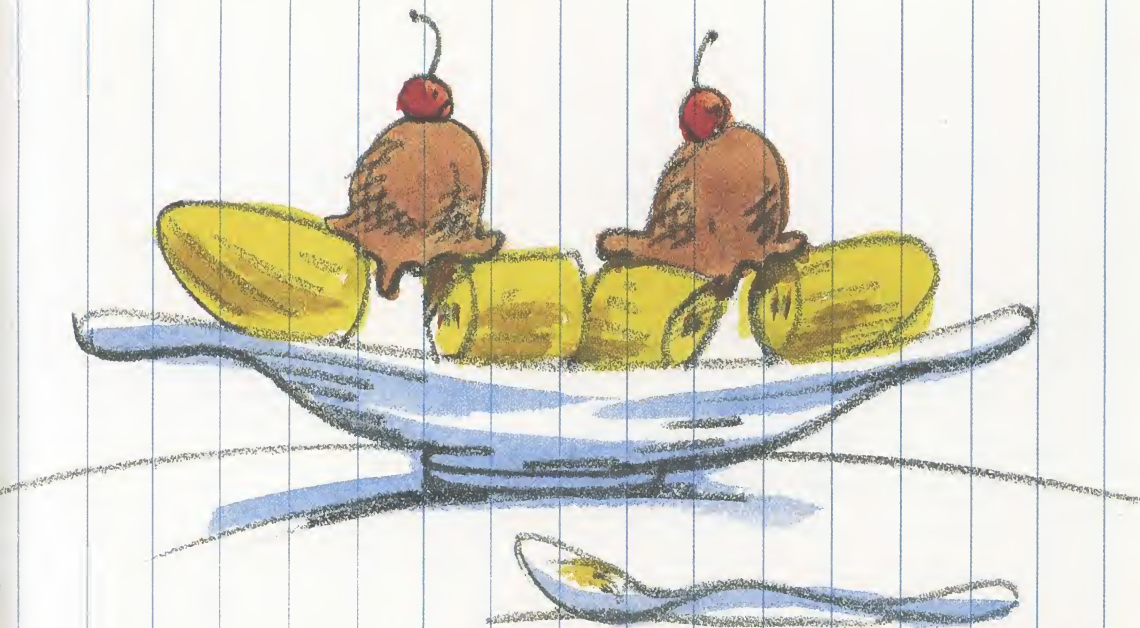
ARTIST'S FILE

CLAES OLDENBURG COOSJE VAN BRUGGEN



MAY 3–JUNE 28, 2002
RECEPTION 6–8 PM TUESDAY, MAY 7

PACEWILDENSTEIN
534 W 25TH ST. NY NY 10001



CLAES OLDENBURG

STANDING MITT WITH BALL

**FROM CONCEPT
TO MONUMENT**



tions, and in one drawing, he compares it to Brancusi's *Muse*. While the sculpture was being fabricated, he even saw it echoed in a pie à la mode that was served to him in a Howard Johnson's. In most of the site studies, it looks like an out-of-scale falling leaf.

As well as these relatively elaborate visualizations of the subject, Oldenburg made numerous simple, almost diagrammatic working sketches in his notebooks. These permit us to see how minutely calibrated his seemingly insignificant modifications of the original mitt really are. But the major impact of the metamorphosis from toy to sculpture resides, obviously, in the huge disparity of scale between the two. At twelve feet high, the *Mitt* acquires tremendous presence, like a tree. The unpolished earth tones of the metal, the play of shadows on the wrinkled inner surface, and the weathered streaking of the shell, the way that the organic looking shape swells from a narrow base and tapers unevenly at the summit all suggest a natural object that has grown slowly in position. In a country where baseball is unknown, the *Mitt* might be taken for an impressive and sheltering totem. Even when one is aware of its comic, slightly absurd origins, it still maintains this aura.

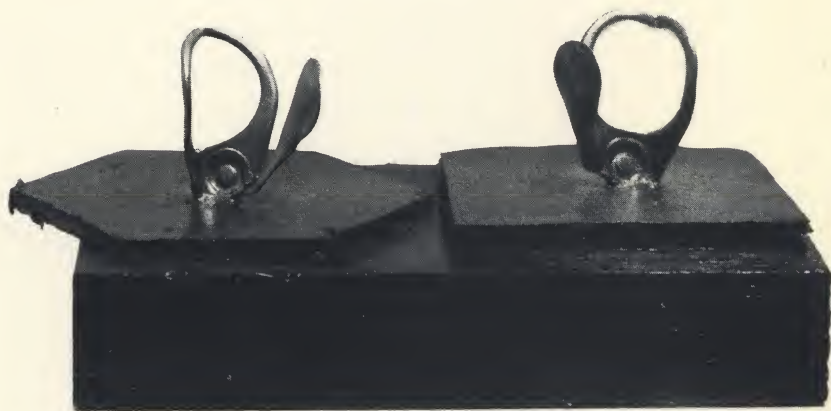
Oldenburg views the *Mitt* as "vulnerable." He refers to the soft palm as its private side; on its original site it faced the house, and turned its back "like a carapace" to the community. It is this public/private dimension, as well as the imagery of a child's toy, which made the subject seem particularly appropriate for the grounds of a family home. The flux and dynamism of the palm is concealed by the shell, just as the intense life of the family is contained behind the unrevealing facade of the house. More fundamentally, the *Mitt* resembles a womb. The idea of gestation is implicit in Oldenburg's classification of the *Mitt* in the same family of images as the milkweed pod, and the drawing *Lying Mitt With Ball*, in which the toy is transmuted into a pearl-bearing oyster. The public side is like a woman's belly, at once protecting and revealing the existence of the child within; the private side looks like

a cross section of a uterus in the early months of pregnancy. Such profound, subliminal sexual associations invest Oldenburg's work with its extraordinary power.

In addition to the drawings and models that reveal the associative and formal evolution of the image, there is copious photographic documentation of the construction of the sculpture. Because of the complex and somewhat improvisational procedures involved in working with lead sheeting, these photographs are particularly fascinating. They often feature an ingenious and dedicated workman at Lippincott named Bob Giza, who figures prominently in a silkscreen print called *Standing Mitt with Bob* as yet another essential component of the sculpture.

Nina Sundell
Guest Curator

1. All quotations are from an interview with the artist in *Oldenburg: Six Themes*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1975, pp. 81 and 95.



Mitt Studies—Pop Tops, 1973

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WAVE HILL

Independence Avenue at 249th Street
Bronx, New York 10471

Standing Mitt with Ball in Greenwich Site, 1973



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Sculpture

Standing Mitt with Ball, 1973

Cor-ten steel, lead and cyprus wood

12' high \times 8' wide \times 5' deep.

Collection Agnes Gund; installed at Wave Hill, 1984

Milkweed Pods (from Maus Museum), 1959

Pods, nail, wire on wood base, painted

8½ \times 4½ \times 2"

Collection of the artist

Model for Standing Mitt with Ball, 1972-74

Toy glove, ball; object painted and mounted

8¾ \times 11½ \times 10"

Collection of the artist

Standing Mitt with Ball Model, 1973

Steel, canvas, wood

42 \times 25¾ \times 18¾"

Collection William J. Hokin, Chicago, Illinois

Standing Mitt with Ball, ½ Scale, 6 ft., 1974

Steel, lead, wood

72" on platform 4 \times 30 \times 36"

Collection The Edward P. Broida Trust,

Los Angeles, California

Drawings

Lying Mitt with Ball, 1972

Pencil, watercolor

8 \times 9⅝"

Collection Fernande Epler Ross, New Haven,

Connecticut

Lying Mitt with Ball, 1972



Standing Mitt, Study, 1973



Study for Standing Mitt, 1972

Crayon, watercolor

19½ × 14"

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Anselm Talalay,
Cleveland, Ohio

Standing Mitt with Ball in Greenwich Site, 1973

Crayon, chalk, watercolor

14⅝ × 19¾"

Collection Malcolm Goldstein, New York

Standing Mitt with Ball in Greenwich Site, 1973

Chalk, pastel

30 × 40"

Private collection, New York

Standing Mitt with Ball in Greenwich Site—Back View,
1973

Watercolor, crayon, chalk

14 × 20"

Collection Margo Leavin Gallery,
Los Angeles, California

Standing Leaf, 1973



Standing Leaf, 1973

Chalk, watercolor

19¾ × 14¼"

Collection Robert H. Halff, Los Angeles, California

Standing Mitt from Back, 1973

Chalk 11¾ × 8⅞"

Collection Henry Hawley, Lakewood, Ohio

Mitt Equals Pie a La Mode, 1973

Crayon, watercolor

15 × 19¾"

Collection of the artist

Notebook studies, 1972–74

Pencil, felt pen, and ball point

Each, 10¾ × 8"

Collection of the artist

Prints

Mitt Print with Bob, 1973

Silkscreen

17¾ × 18½"

Private collection, New York

Paste up for Mitt Print with Bob, 1973

Silkscreen with watercolor, pencil

17⅝ × 18½"

Collection of the artist

Standing Mitt in Greenwich Site, 1973

Lithograph

17⅝ × 18"

Private collection, New York

Notes, 1968

Twelve color lithographs

16 × 23"

Published by Gemini, G.E.L., Los Angeles, California

Photodocumentation

Construction photographs by

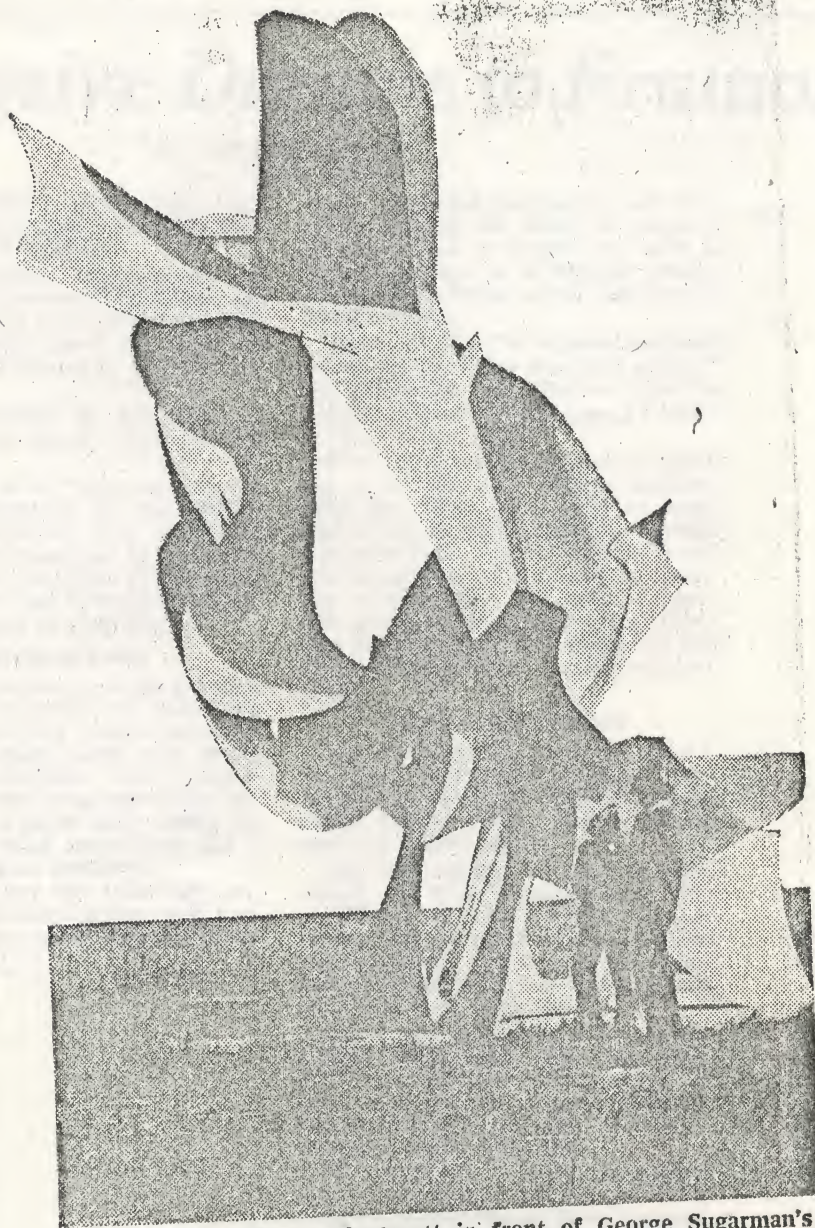
Roxanne Everett, 1973

Factory Brings Sculptors



The New York Times/James Meehan

Don Lippincott, left, Claes Oldenburg and Roxanne Everett inspecting Mr. Oldenburg's "Inverted Q" at Lippincott Inc., in North Haven, Conn.



Miss Everett and Mr. Lippincott in front of George Sugarman's
"Yellow Ascending" in the sculpture near the factory.



RICK MEYER / Los Angeles Times

Workers install Claes Oldenburg's "Toppling Ladder"; at right, artist

INSTALLING NEW WORK



RICK MEYER / Los Angeles Times

Claes Oldenburg, wife-partner Coosje van Bruggen supervise installation of "Toppling Ladder" sculpture at Loyola Law School.

OLDENBURG

SIX THEMES

Standing Mitt with Ball Geometric Mouse
Typewriter Eraser Clothespin
Three-Way Plug Fagends

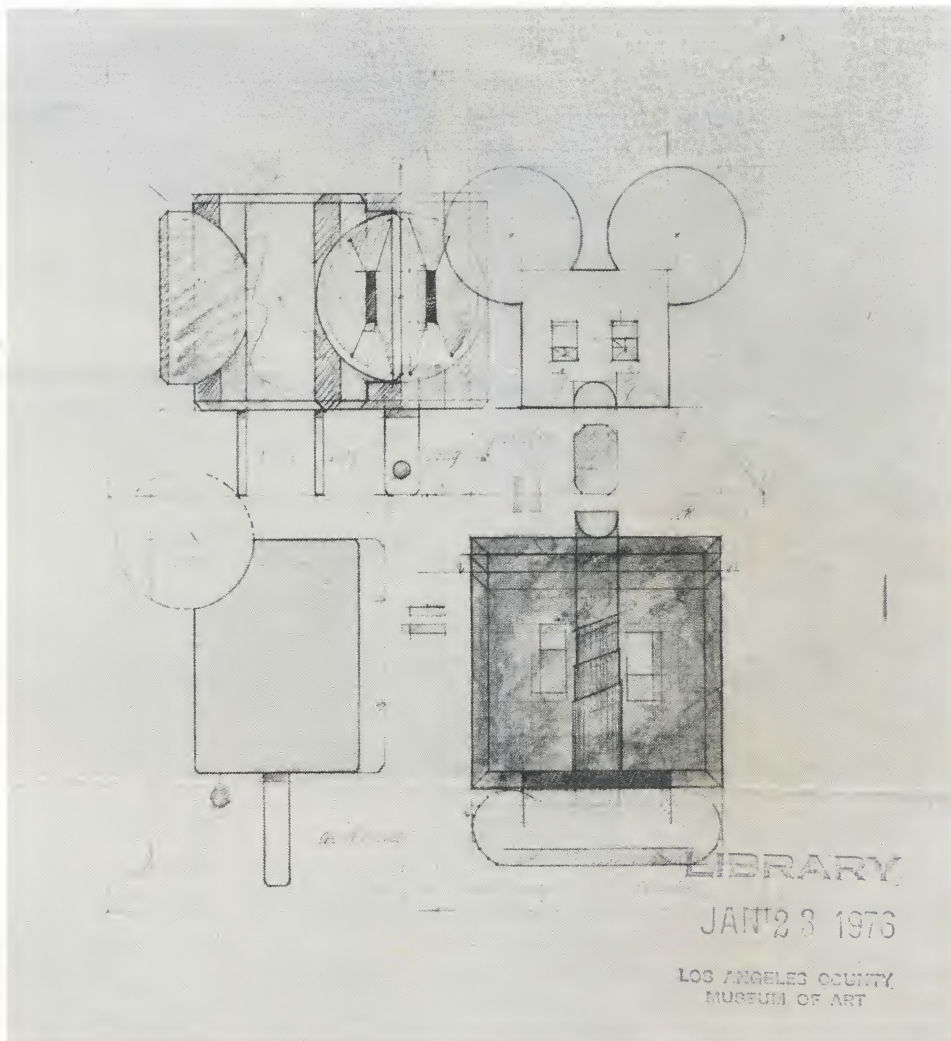
I'm not an abstract artist. I'm a realist. The way I look at it, abstraction is not sufficiently complicated: abstraction doesn't relate enough to everyday life. . . . I'm a purist on my own terms but not a purist in the sense that I want to eliminate the world of appearances or the tactile world.
Claes Oldenburg

The complicated relationships between the "world of appearances" and underlying reality are the subjects of Claes Oldenburg's art. His is the sort of paradoxical wit cherished by the 17th century metaphysical poets who sought to resolve contradictions between apparent opposites through language. Oldenburg has added a new dimension to their wordplay, fusing visual and verbal puns in an ingenious unity of imagery that suggests a rich multiplicity of meanings.

This exhibition explores the evolution of six important Oldenburg themes through startling transformations in material and scale that actually accentuate the underlying similarity of their forms. For it is relationships, associations, and affinities between extremes that engage Oldenburg's interest. The familiar objects he chooses to develop are divorced from their original function as the artist takes them through a series of changes that emphasizes their family resemblance. In *System of Iconography*, he explicitly reduces to their common formal denominator *Three-Way Plug*, *Mouse*, *Good Humor Bar*, *Switches*, and *Lipstick*.

I'd like to turn people on to the fact that the world is form, not just function and money. Think of the fun it would be to sit on your porch and look at the world as form.

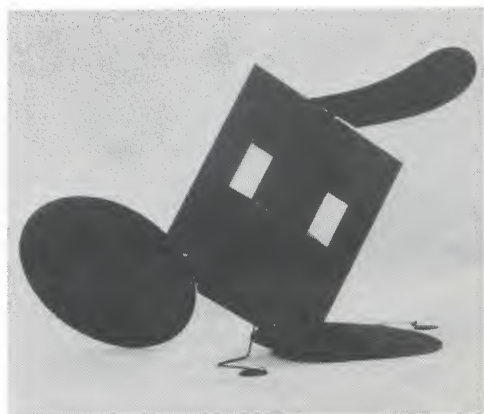
Although he abandoned the human figure as a major subject as early as 1959, allusions to the human body and human psychological states are still strong in Oldenburg's work. In dealing with what he has described as "archetypal forms" that "are constantly engaged in promiscuous intercourse and may turn up as almost anything," Oldenburg seems always aware of their tendency



Above: *System of Iconography: Plug, Mouse, Good Humor Bar, Switches and Lipstick - Version One*, 1970, pencil and crayon. Made for the June 1970 cover of *Studio International*. Below, left: *Notebook Page: Typewriter Eraser, Medusa*, 1970, ball-point pen and pastel. Below, right: *Fagends in Bag Ashtray*, 1967, crayon and watercolor. Coll. Ms. Eve Propp, New York.



to act as metaphors for human anatomy: *Clothespin* suggests a standing person; like the stylized tribal mask, *Geometric Mouse* recalls the human face; and the columnar form of *Fagends* alludes insistently to components of the human figure. The organic unity of all forms, their complex interaction and protean metamorphoses, are dynamically explored in Oldenburg's work, compelling us to share his unique imaginative vision.



Geometric Mouse — Scale C, 1971, painted aluminum with brass chains. Courtesy Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles.

Geometric Mouse

What is the Mouse anyway? It is a toy, it's a doodle. It's a highly objectified animate object, really. . . . It's a schematic form and it's no more of a living form than a Chinese character; it's a three-dimensional symbolic character in some ways. It refers to animate things, but one mustn't confuse the original object with my representation of it. In my view the Mouse is cerebral . . . only a head. You see, it's not a mouse, it's the head of a mouse. The Mouse is a skull and refers to mortality. People don't see that about the Mouse; perhaps they don't want to see it.

There's also a relationship between analysis and death — the analytical intellect and death — because it's an anti-flesh thing, so there's all that area to explore, that content where the Mouse is the prince of death or a symbol of it. . . . We must remember that the Mouse is a head only; it is a mental mouse.

Three-Way Plug

One of the nicest things about the Three-Way Plug is that it's built up of symmetrical forms, so that if you look at one side, you know what the other side looks like. In the steel version, which is always half-buried, you know what's under the ground by what's over the ground — because you know that it repeats itself.

The first step is building a hard model so that I can get the patterns to make the soft one. I had to build a cardboard Three-Way Plug in 1965. I didn't even contemplate a soft one at that time. I was just thinking of reconstructing the plug in an ideal way. I wanted to change it from the original, to



Sculpture in the Form of a Three-Way Plug, Sited, 1972, crayon and watercolor. Coll. Michael Crichton, Los Angeles.

simplify it, to make it look more the way I wanted it to look.

I've heard it referred to as a "space man" because it seems to have legs and eyes but not a body in the conventional sense. An object doesn't have to be anthropomorphic to have life. When the Soft Plug is hanging and the prongs are bent under, it has attitudes that are reminiscent of human beings. Anything soft, of course, becomes flesh-like. . . . There are two ways of experiencing matter: the solid state and the dissolving state; both are physical and psychical.

Fagends

In looking for images in London, I became very aware of columns and columnar forms. . . . I was thinking about making a multiple using cigarette butts in an ashtray. And so I started to make several of these Fagends. . . . I got into the habit of collecting cigarette butts. I preferred those cork-tipped ones. I would select them after parties and put them into plastic bags, and then I would clean them up and mount them.

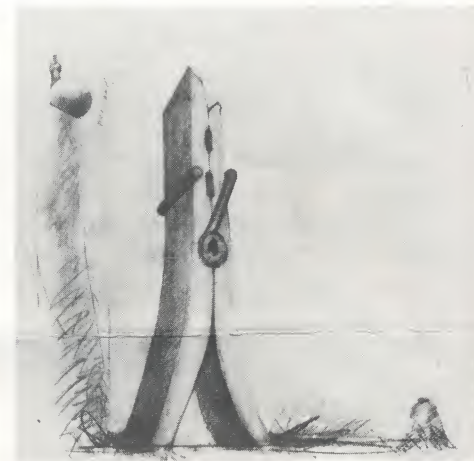
"Cigarette butt" is an American title, but it seemed clumsy, not very attractive. "Fagend" seemed much more elegant, especially since I was living in the West End and collecting fagends there. It's slang, and people kept referring to them as fagends. . . .

The idea of the earlier smaller ones was that you could restack and rearrange them. They always are shown in a different way; they have a tendency also to fall off the ashtray, a tendency encouraged by the shape of the ashtray itself.

I think it's a difficult piece because people are repelled by the subject matter. There are a lot of reasons why people reject cigarette butts. At the same time it's a monumental piece. It might be appropriate to have it in the Ruhr because of the smoke and cannon aspects. I could also imagine it on a village green in place of the traditional stack of cannonballs. It also has the shape of those old-time fortresses with sloping walls. . . . I think it embodies the cruelty of material to a certain extent.

Clothespin

In 1967 I became aware of a building under construction in Chicago — the Hancock Building — which was radical in its departure from the usual straight-sided building format. One of my goals is to enlarge objects into buildings. Here in Chicago was a building that had the look of one of my objects — a clothespin. . . . I asked myself where the Clothespin should be situated and I recalled having seen a marvelous book about the 1922 competition for the design of the Chicago Tribune Tower. The book contains a lot of proposals which could be precursors of my colossal monuments. . . . I felt that the Clothespin had something in common with the pseudo-Gothic character of the present Tribune Tower, the building that won the competition. Therefore, I proposed the Clothespin as a late submission to the competition and drew it on the site of the present building.



Late Submission to the Chicago Tribune Architectural Competition of 1922: Clothespin — Version One, 1967, crayon, pencil, and watercolor. Coll. Philip Johnson, New Canaan, Connecticut.

Typewriter Eraser

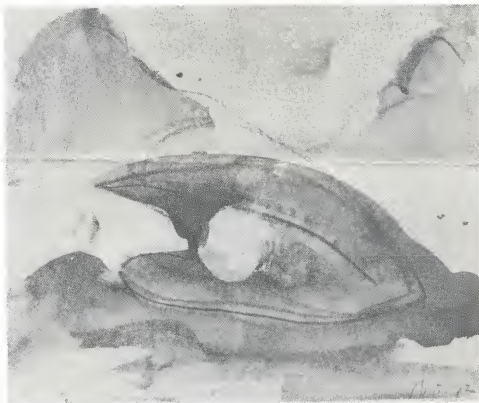
At first I didn't know how to set the thing up. It was like the Mitt; you don't know what is up or down on a typewriter eraser, so I could stand it on its end, on its hairs. I experimented with cardboard models and different ways of positioning it. That's why some of the drawings are called "Second Position" and "Third Position," and why there's a whole set in different positions. Finally I decided on one called the "Bent Position," where the thing seems to have fallen out of a window and landed in a courtyard. . . . However, now I have a new position for the Eraser in which it is more in action, sort of flying — just at the moment when it touches the ground. It's like a wheel with a wing.

Standing Mitt with Ball

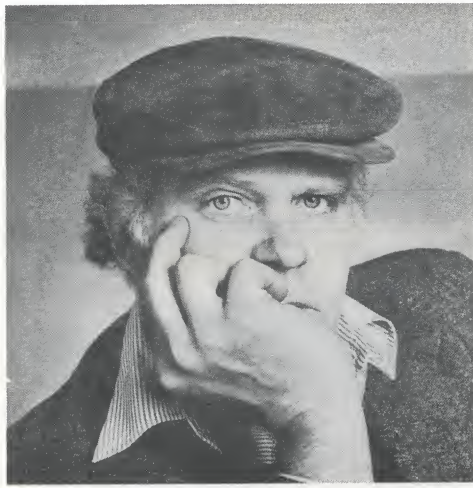
A baseball mitt is a two-sided form. It is usually perceived from its most functional, or interior side that catches the ball. In the sculpture, this function is of no significance

and the mitt is just as interesting from the back or sides and the image, especially of the upright mitt, varies greatly depending on your position. It's a spiral form that carries the eye around and upward, and the ball becomes the focus of the spiral.

After making the Mitt, I realized that it echoed the shape of one of my first constructions, a branch of milkweed pods that I had mounted in an erect position back in 1959. This made the mitt image seem part of my repertoire of forms. I hadn't been quite sure about that before. The shape is biomorphic and related to stereotypes of biomorphic forms in modern art, such as those growing out of the sculpture of Arp. I also think it resembles the Barbara Hepworth in front of the UN, where an open hole replaces the ball. I've made a drawing comparing the silhouette of the Mitt seen from behind to Brancusi's Sleeping Muse. It also resembles a heart, an oyster, a colossal ear. Recently, I saw a broken-off hand of a Buddha figure which was almost the same size as the six-foot model. I think of the Mitt as object version, a mechanical version of the hand. It's my form of figure sculpture!



Above: *Lying Mitt with Ball*, 1972, pencil and watercolor. Coll. Fernande Epler Ross, New Haven, Connecticut. Below: *Study for Standing Mitt*, 1973, crayon and watercolor. Courtesy Leo Castelli Gallery.



Chronology

1929-1946

Born Stockholm, Sweden. 1930-33, lived in New York City and Rye, New York. 1933-36, lived in Oslo, Norway. 1936, family settled in Chicago. 1946, graduated from Latin School.

1946-50

Yale University: studied literature and art.

1950-56

Lived in Chicago. Apprentice reporter at City News Bureau. 1952, full-time art student at Art Institute of Chicago. Naturalized as U. S. citizen.

1956

Moved to New York City, working part-time at Cooper Union Museum Library (until November, 1961).

1958

First exhibition in New York: drawings included in group show at Red Groom's City Gallery.

1959

One-artist show at Cooper Union Museum Library and Judson Gallery: poems, figure drawings, and works in cardboard, newspaper, and burlap. Began work in theater pieces. Contacts with other artists included Jim Dine, George Brecht, Allan Kaprow, George Segal, and Robert Whitman.

1960

The Street exhibited with Jim Dine's *The House* in Ray Gun Show at Judson Gallery. Married Pat Muschinski. Designed sets for Robert Duncan's *Faust Foutu* at Living Theater.

1961

The Store, brightly colored plaster interpretations of cheap merchandise, exhibited in his storefront studio at 107 East Second Street. *Red Tights*, first work to enter a museum collection, purchased by The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1962

Participated in ten Ray Gun Theater "happenings" staged at his studio. Collaborated with Robert Breer on film, *Pat's Birthday*. First exhibition of large-scale "soft"

sculpture made of painted canvas at Green Gallery, New York: *Floor-Burger*, *Floor-Cake*, etc. Represented in *My Country 'Tis of Thee*, Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, first group showing of pop art.

1963

First vinyl works, *Soft Telephone* and *BLT*. Participated in twelve group shows including 66th American Annual Exhibition, Art Institute of Chicago; *Americans 1963*, Museum of Modern Art; *Pop Art U.S.A.*, Oakland Art Museum, California; and *The Popular Image*, Institute of Contemporary Art, London. One-artist exhibition, Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, included *Baked Potato*, *Good Humor Bar*, and *Giant Blue Shirt*.

1964

The Home, first one-artist show at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, included soft versions of *Typewriter*, *Telephone*, and *Sewing Machine*. One of eight Americans represented at XXXII Biennale, Venice. Spent summer and fall in Europe. At temporary Paris studio, prepared drawings and plaster constructions for one-artist show at Galerie Sonnabend, Paris.

1965

First drawings of monuments shown in group exhibition, *Recent Work*, at Sidney Janis Gallery. Executed watercolors of monuments for *Domus* magazine: *Teddy Bear*, *Fan on Staten Island*, *Banana for Times Square*, etc. *Moveyhouse*, featuring *Mouse* theme, performed at Film-Makers' Cinematheque, New York. First cardboard model of *Three-Way Plug*.

1966

Airflow and *Bathroom* themes featured in *New Work by Claes Oldenburg*, Sidney Janis Gallery. In Sweden to prepare for exhibition at Moderna Museet, Stockholm. At London studio, executed *London Knees* multiple and London-inspired drawings and sculpture, including *Fagends*.

1967

One-artist exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery including new monument proposals: *Fagends* and *Drain Pipe* variations. *Giant Soft Fan* installed in United States Pavilion at Expo '67, Montreal. Executed drawings on *Drum Set* theme as artist-in-residence at Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, Colorado. Drawings for *Colossal Monuments* shown at Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Began *Clothespin* theme with two versions of drawing, *Late Submission to the Chicago Tribune Architectural Competition of 1922: Clothespin*. Executed painted canvas version of *Fagends* theme: *Giant Fagends - Scale I*.

1968

In Los Angeles, began work with Gemini G.E.L.: lithographic edition of *Notes* and two multiples. In New York, produced two cardboard versions of *Geometric Mouse*.



Fagends Carved in Rock, 1972, pencil and watercolor.

1969

Beginning of collaboration with Lippincott Environmental Arts, Inc. (now Lippincott Inc.) on large-scale outdoor sculptures. First "feasible" monument, *Lipstick Ascending on Caterpillar Tracks*, installed at Yale University. In Los Angeles, planned and appeared in film on *Ice Bag* theme, *Sort of a Commercial for an Ice Bag*, directed by Michael Hugo, photographed by Eric Saarinen (showing throughout the current exhibition in the seminar room). Survey of three-dimensional objects and drawings, 1954-69, organized by the Museum of Modern Art, later shown at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf; and the Tate Gallery, London.

1970

Installed 18-foot *Ice Bag* at Expo '70, Osaka, Japan; *Geometric Mouse — Scale A, 2/6*, at Meadows Museum, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas; and *Giant Three-Way Plug*, 1/3, at Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.

1971

Geometric Mouse — Scale A, 3/6, installed at private home in Massachusetts, later acquired (1975) by Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. *Trowel* installed at Park Sonsbeek, Arnhem, The Netherlands, later permanently resited at Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller Otterlo, The Netherlands. *Giant Three-Way Plug, 2/3*, installed at City Art Museum, St. Louis.

1972

Exhibited *Giant Ice Bag* at Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and *Three-Way Plug — Scale D, Soft, Denim* at Sidney Janis Gallery. *Maus Museum* installed at Documenta 5, Kassel, Germany. Began work on *Mitt* theme.

1973

Giant Soft Three-Way Plug installed at Des Moines Art Center, Iowa. One-artist show of sculptures and drawings at Minami Gallery, Tokyo. *Standing Mitt with Ball*, 12-foot lead and steel version, installed at private home, Greenwich, Connecticut. *Geometric Mouse — Scale A, 4/6*, acquired by Moderna Museet.

1974

Drawings and sculptures on *Mitt* subject shown at Dayton Art Institute, Ohio. *Clothespins*, 10-foot and 3-foot versions, and lead and steel model of *Standing Mitt with Ball* included in one-artist show, Castelli Gallery, New York. *Soft Drum Set, Ghost Version*, 1971, and *Bedroom Ensemble*, 1964, included in *American Pop Art* exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Geometric Mouse — Scale A, 5/6*, installed at Walker Art Center. Fabrication of *Geometric Mouse — Scale A, 6/6*, ghost version.

1975

Completion of *Colossal Ashtray* at Lippincott Inc.

With the generous permission of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, statements by Claes Oldenburg (in italics above) have been excerpted from the catalog prepared especially for this exhibition. The chronology has been compiled from the Walker catalog and from Barbara Rose's *Claes Oldenburg* (The Museum of Modern Art, 1970).

Special Events

Gallery Tours

Well-informed docents will tour the exhibition and answer your questions every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday during the exhibition. Meet in the Stanton Gallery at 1:30 p.m.

Films

Sort of a Commercial for an Ice Bag — a 20-minute film conceived and acted in by Oldenburg himself. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at 2 p.m.

Claes Oldenburg — a fascinating 54-minute film that features Oldenburg talking about his background and his art. At 1:30 every Tuesday and Saturday afternoon and at 7:30 on the following Wednesday evenings: July 2, July 30, and August 6.

Lectures

July 9 — *Claes Oldenburg: The Man and His Work*, Duncan Pollock, art critic for the *Rocky Mountain News*

July 23 — *The Object as Subject*, Sally Everett, instructor, art history, Metropolitan State College

August 13 — Lecture/dialogue on Oldenburg, Dr. Robert J. Forsyth, professor of art history, and John C. Berland, professor of sculpture, Colorado State University.

All lectures at 7:30 p.m., seminar room.

Further Reading

About the Artist

Baro, Gene. *Claes Oldenburg: Drawings and Prints*. London and New York: Chelsea House, 1969.

Carroll, Paul. *Claes Oldenburg: Proposals for Monuments and Buildings, 1965-69*. Chicago: Big Table Publishing Company, 1969.

Haskell, Barbara. *Claes Oldenburg: Object into Monument*. Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1971.

Johnson, Ellen H. *Claes Oldenburg*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971.

Rose, Barbara. *Claes Oldenburg*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970.

Rosenberg, Harold. "From Pollock to Pop: 20 Years of Painting and Sculpture." *Holiday*, March 1966, pp. 96-104, 136-140.

The Artist Speaks

"Claes Oldenburg: Extracts from the Studio Notes, 1962-1964." *Artforum*, January 1966, pp. 32-33. Selected by Max Kozloff.

"Take a Cigarette Butt and Make It Heroic." *Art News*, May 1967, pp. 30-31, 77.

"The Artist Speaks: Claes Oldenburg." *Art in America*, March-April 1969, pp. 68-75. Interview by John Coplans.

"From Oldenburg's Notebooks." *Art Scene*, May 1969, pp. 6-9.

Notes in Hand. New York: Petersburg Press, 1971.

Raw Notes. Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1973.



Colossal Floating Three-Way Plug, 1965, pencil.

Oldenburg: Six Themes

Illustrated catalog with introduction by Martin Friedman and interviews with Claes Oldenburg. Published by the Walker Art Center, 1975. 100 pages, 10 x 10 in.

Available at the Denver Art Museum Bookshop. Price: \$6.95, members \$6.25

Oldenburg Sees Nothing Insignificant

Show in Varied Media
Is at Castelli Gallery

By JOHN RUSSELL

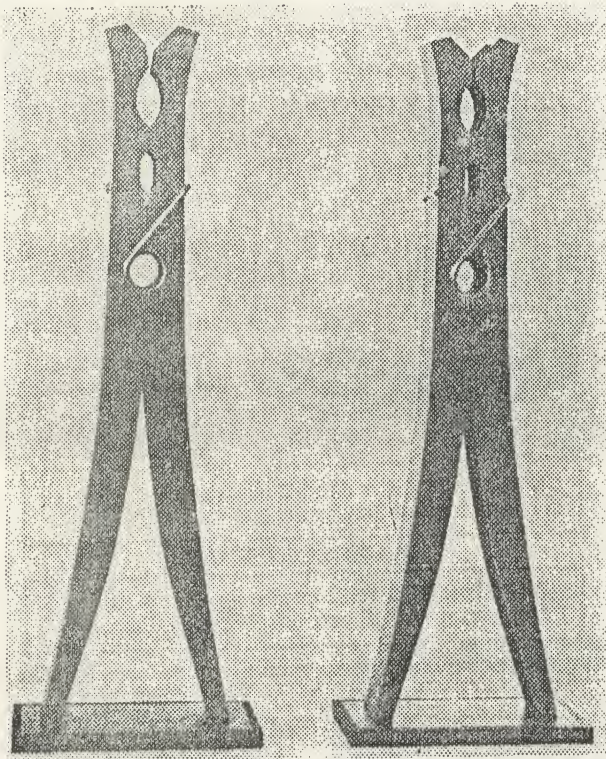
No one is better than Claes Oldenburg at the all-American subject, the "Standing Mitt With Ball," for instance, which appears in several sizes and guises in his new show at Leo Castelli's (4 East 77th Street). But it is important that Mr. Oldenburg was born in Stockholm of Swedish parents, lived in Oslo for three years when he was in short pants and has inherited from his father a diplomat's awareness and apartness—a professional's ability, in other words to size up an unfamiliar situation in no time at all.

He is also, as we all know, a visionary artist with a streak of gigantomania. In the 19th century he would have been a history painter on the grand scale, pulling down the temple with Samson, smiting this tribe or that with hailstones and thunderbolts, sundering the walls of Jericho with trumpets that would have made Berlioz himself run for cover.

In our own time the ideas have mostly, so far, been kept to the size of a sheet of writing-paper, but society may one day call his bluff. Already a giant Mickey Mouse by Mr. Oldenburg is on view, for instance, through June 30 at the Hammar skjold Plaza Sculpture Garden, Second Avenue and 47th Street.

That is the Oldenburg most lately seen, but there is also the Oldenburg who once wrote, "I am for the sad brown art of rotting apples" and "I am for the white art of refrigerators and their muscular openings and closings." Mr. Oldenburg would reinvent the Brooklyn Bridge, if he were given the chance, but he is also someone who looks at the totality of everyday life and finds in it nothing that is insignificant. "Only connect!" was E. M. Forster's message to generation after generation of wincing English esthetes, but the men who really connects is Claes Oldenburg.

He does it as a cosmopolitan, someone who can tell in what city he is by the cigarette butt in the ashtray or the complexion of a piece of pie. He is unrelentingly observant (there is something here of his 11 years' service



Eric Pollitzer

Sculpture by Claes Oldenburg, shown by Leo Castelli

as a reporter in Chicago), but his observation is of the kind that Vladimir Nabokov deployed in the cross-country sections of "Lolita."

At the same time he believes that art is there to release energies and to restore satisfactions, for which society has forgotten to find a name. It's an idea that sometimes has to be smuggled in. There is for instance, at Leo Castelli's, a drawing of a piece of melting butter in a landscape. The butter is as big as Grand Central Station, but Mr. Oldenburg has sited it so naturally, and in so convincing a subsection of Arcadia, that it takes a while to realize what is going on. (Mr. Oldenburg can command, on occasions, a Marinlike fluency that somehow compounds the joke).

The point of novelty in the show is, however, the "Clothespin" series. One of these is a maquette in cardboard; the others were made by Lipincott's, the engineering company that has brought an

ideal precision to Mr. Oldenburg's imaginings. Mr. Oldenburg is a big boy now, and I think we can take it for granted that he sees the clothespin not only as a useful instrument for the laundress but as a metaphor for what happens when two perfectly matched human bodies come together. (He himself makes that point quite clear in a related print, where a photograph of Brancusi's "Kiss" is collaged next to a drawing for the "Clothespin.")

So the clothespin is a metaphor for perfect mating. In Mr. Oldenburg's earlier soft pieces an awareness of human fallibility was programmed into the work, but in the "Clothespin" series this is replaced by a notion of ideal beauty and flawless interlocking. It could be chance; the result of craftsmanship that just doesn't alarm Mr. Oldenburg is too bright for that. Remember what he said of his "Bedroom" (now on view at the Whitney in Lawrence Alloway's "Pop Art" show — that "my bedroom, my little gray geometric home in the West, is two-stepping with Edward Hopper" — we can be pretty sure that he knew what was being done in his name. As the pieces hand-sewn in distant days by Pat Oldenburg, the potential of a specific means of expression has been pushed to the limit, in its own terms; and those terms include, in this case, both an athletic monumentality and a perfection of line that went out with Rodin and might have seemed impossible to bring back in again.

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CLAES OLDENBURG

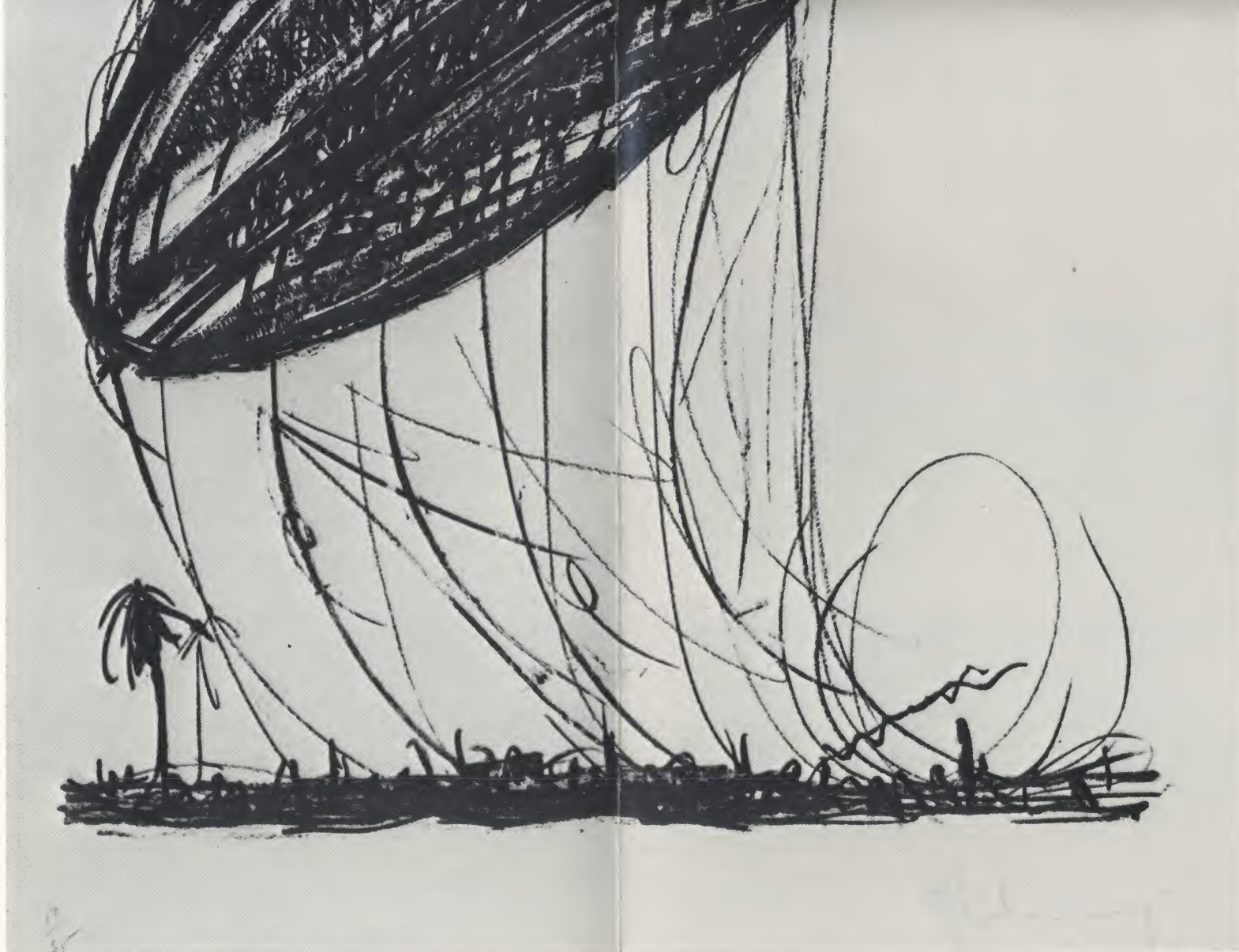
of the **Grusoe Umbrella**,
in Des Moines, Iowa,
and the **Flashlight**,
for Las Vegas, Nevada,
in the **Leo Castelli Gallery**,
420 West Broadway, and
142 Greene Street,
New York City; with models,
plans and etchings of
large-scale projects,
1977-1980.

From 24 May to 14 June 1980.









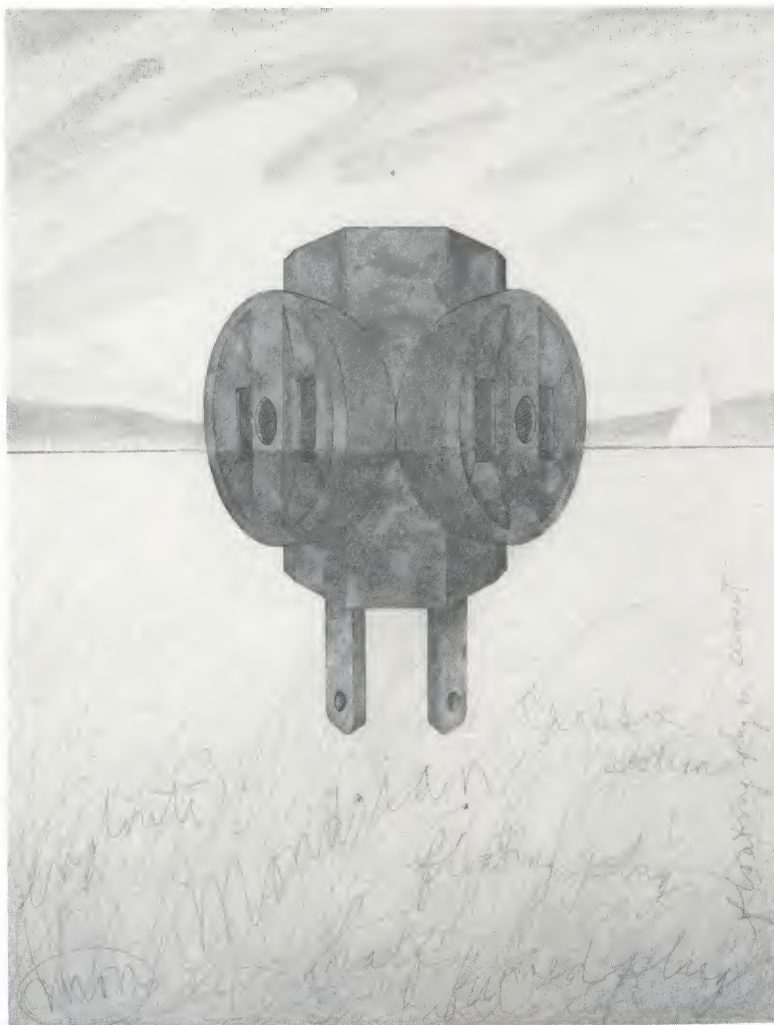
SOFT SCREW AS BALLOON, ASCENDING 1975, LITHOGRAPH, 67½"x45," EDITION OF 35





CLAES OLDENBURG

PRINTS AND MULTIPLES



21.

September 4 through 29, 1990

SUSAN SHEEHAN GALLERY

OLDENBURG, CLAES

CLAES OLDENBURG

PRINTS AND MULTIPLES

1. *New Media, New Forms I*, 1960. Photo engraving. Signed in pencil. $22\frac{1}{8} \times 17\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Oldenburg designed this poster to announce the exhibition, *New Media, New Forms I* at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York, 1960.
2. *Orpheum Sign*, 1962. Etching and aquatint. Leavin 3. Edition: 60, plus 25 artist's proofs. Printed by Atelier Georges Leblanc, Paris. Published by Galleria Schwarz, Milan. Signed, dated, and numbered in pencil. $10 \times 7\frac{1}{8}$ inches, the sheet $11\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{3}{8}$ inches. From the folio *The International Anthology of Contemporary Engraving: The International Avant-Garde: America Discovered*, Volume 5, 1962.
3. *Injun*, 1962. Hand-printed letterpress, printed in color on card. Leavin 47. Signed in pencil. 26×20 inches, the sheet 28×22 inches. In 1962, a large portion of the multi-media gallery installation, "The Store" was sent to Dallas for inclusion in the exhibition, "1961" at the now defunct Dallas Museum for Contemporary Arts. Oldenburg assisted with the installation and also performed "Injun," a Ray Gun Theater Production, at the Museum. This poster was printed to announce this event.
4. *Green Gallery*, 1962. Offset lithograph printed in colors. Leavin 48. Signed in pencil. 15×16 inches, the sheet $22\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Oldenburg's one man exhibition at New York's Green Gallery in 1962 was the first time that his large-scale "soft" sculptures were exhibited. The artist made this poster to announce this exhibition.
5. *Stars*, 1963. Hand-printed letterpress printed on colored card. Leavin 49. Signed in pencil. $26\frac{1}{2} \times 20\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the sheet $28\frac{1}{4} \times 22$ inches. Oldenburg designed this poster to announce the happening "Stars"; that was performed in the Pop Art Festival at the Washington Gallery of Modern Art in the spring of 1963.
6. *Pizza*, 1964. Lithograph printed in colors. Leavin 8. Edition: 200, plus 25 artist's proofs. Printed by Hollander Workshop, New York. Published by Tanglewood Press, New York. Signed, dated, and numbered in pencil. $15\frac{1}{16} \times 21\frac{1}{16}$ inches, the sheet 17×22 inches. From the portfolio *New York 10*.
7. *Tea Bag*, 1966. Screenprint on felt, clear plexiglass, and plastic. Leavin 31. Edition: 125. Printed by Knickerbocker Machine and Foundry, New York. Published by Multiples, Inc., New York. Signed and numbered, on the verso in pencil. $39\frac{1}{16} \times 28\frac{1}{16} \times 3$ inches. From the series *Four on Plexiglas*.
8. *Seven Objects In a Box*, 1966. Seven multiple objects. Edition: 75. Manufactured by Knickerbocker Machine and Foundry, New York. Published by Tanglewood Press, New York. Each signed and numbered. Various composition sizes. The set includes: Allan D'Archangelo: *Side View Mirror*, silkscreen on plexiglas inserted in chrome plated fixture, mounted on plexiglas base; Jim Dine: *Rainbow Faucet*, hand-painted cast aluminum; Roy Lichtenstein: *Sunset*, baked enamel on metal; Claes Oldenburg: *Baked Potato*, hand painted cast acrylic; George Segal: *Chicken*, cast acrylic and fiberglass; Andy Warhol: *Kiss*, silkscreen on plexiglas; Tom Wesselmann: *Nude*, silkscreen on vacuum-form plastic.
9. *Knäckerbröd*, 1966. Cast iron. Leavin 35. Edition: 250. Published by the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden. Signed and numbered, on the verso in felt tip pen. $6\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{3}{4}$ inches.
10. *Scissors Obelisk*, 1967. Lithograph printed in colors. Leavin 11. Edition: 144. Printed by Atelier Mourlot, New York. Published by the List Art Poster Program, New York. Signed, dated, and numbered in pencil. $29\frac{1}{16} \times 20$ inches, the sheet 30×20 inches. From the portfolio *National Collection of Fine Arts*.

11. *Soft Scissors*, 1967. Lithograph printed in colors. Leavin 12. Edition: 144. Printed by Atelier Mourlot, New York. Published by the List Art Poster Program, New York. Signed, dated, and numbered in pencil. $28\frac{1}{16} \times 17\frac{15}{16}$, the sheet 30×20 inches. From the portfolio *National Collection of Fine Arts*.
12. *Nose*, 1968. Silkscreen on silk handkerchief. Leavin 13. Edition: 150. Published by Documenta, Kassel, West Germany. Initialed, dated, and numbered in pencil. 13×12 inches, the cloth 19×19 inches.
13. *S.M.S.: The Portable Museum of Original Multiples, Shit Must Stop*, 1968. Six volume set of multiple objects. Various artists. Various media. Published by The Letter Edged in Black Press, New York. Various composition sizes. This portfolio contains Oldenburg's *Unattendable Lunches*.
14. *Miniature Soft Drum Set*, 1970. Silkscreen on canvas, with hand-painting; mounted on a wooden base covered with silkscreened paper; cord and wood parts. Leavin 38. Edition: 200. Cloth fabricated by Abechrome Flag and Banner Company. Woodwork fabricated by Red Polari. Published by Multiples, New York. $9\frac{3}{4} \times 19 \times 13\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
15. *Notes in Hand*, 1971. Portfolio of fifty offset lithographs printed in colors, two black and white photographs all mounted on card with a colophon. Leavin 28. Edition: 100, plus 20 artist's proofs. Printed by Professional Prints Ltd, Switzerland. Published by Professional Prints Ltd, Switzerland and Petersburg Press, London and New York. Each offset lithograph initialed and numbered in pencil. Composition size varies, each card measures $9\frac{3}{4} \times 8$ inches. This set retains its original cloth-covered portfolio box.
16. *Baked Potato with Butter*, 1972. Lithograph printed in colors. Edition: 100, plus 20 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Petersburg Press, London and New York. Signed, dated, and numbered in pencil. $26\frac{1}{2} \times 33$ inches, the sheet $30\frac{3}{4} \times 40$ inches.
17. *Tea Bag*, 1972. Lithograph printed in colors. Edition: 100, plus 20 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Petersburg Press, London and New York. Initialed, dated, and numbered in pencil. $24\frac{3}{4} \times 18\frac{3}{4}$ inches, the sheet $30\frac{3}{4} \times 22\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
18. *Store Window: Bows, Hats, Heart, Shirt*, 29¢, 1973. Lithograph printed in colors. Edition: 75. Printed and published by Landfall Press, Chicago. Initialed, dated, and numbered in blue crayon. $15 \times 19\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the sheet 23×27 inches.



19.

19. *The Teapot*, 1975. Lithograph. Sparks 1. Edition: 34, plus 19 artist's proofs. Printed and published by U.L.A.E., West Islip, New York. Signed, dated, and numbered in pencil. $12 \times 15\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the sheet 18×26 inches. Printed on handmade Balinese paper, tipped onto Moriki paper.
20. *Bat Spinning at the Speed of Light (State II)*, 1975. Lithograph printed in color. Edition: 35. Printed and published by Landfall Press, Chicago. Initialed, numbered, and titled in pencil. 31×21 inches, the sheet 37×25 inches.
21. *Floating Three-Way Plug*, 1976. Soft-ground, hard-ground etching and aquatint printed in colors. Edition: 60, plus 25 artist's proofs. Printed by Crown Point Press, Oakland, California. Published by Multiples, New York. Signed, dated, and numbered in pencil. 42×32 inches, the sheet $49\frac{3}{4} \times 38\frac{3}{8}$ inches.
22. *Ice Cream Delights*, 1976. Etching and aquatint printed in colors. Edition: 50, plus 12 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Petersburg Press, London and New York. Initialed, dated, and numbered in brown pencil. $13\frac{1}{2} \times 21$ inches, the sheet $22\frac{1}{2} \times 31$ inches.
23. *Ice Cream Dessert Praline*, 1976. Etching and aquatint printed in colors. Edition: 60, plus artist's proofs. Printed and published by Petersburg Press, London and New York. Signed, dated, and numbered in pencil. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the sheet $25\frac{1}{4} \times 20\frac{1}{8}$ inches.

24. *Colossal Screw in Landscape—Type 1*, 1976. Lithograph. Edition: 35, plus 11 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 49½ × 24 inches, the sheet 67¼ × 40¼ inches.

25. *Soft Screw in Waterfall*, 1976. Lithograph. Edition: 35, plus 11 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 47½ × 35 inches, the sheet 67¼ × 45 inches.

26. *Arched Soft Screw as a Balloon*, 1976. Lithograph. Edition: 35, plus 11 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 67½ × 45 inches.

27. *Soft Screws, Tumbling, #2*, 1976. Lithograph. Edition: 35, plus 11 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 67½ × 40½ inches.

28. *Arch in the Form of a Screw, for Times Square NYC*, 1976. Lithograph. Edition: 35, plus 11 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 67½ × 40½ inches.

29. *Button*, 1981. Cast paper, mounted on silk-screened board, fitted in a plexiglas box. Edition: 100, plus 14 artist's proofs. Fabricated and published by Multiples, New York. Initialed, dated, and numbered in pencil. 16 × 14 × 6¼ inches.

30. *Apple Core—Autumn*, 1990. Lithograph printed in colors. Edition: 58, plus 12 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 27½ × 21¼ inches, the sheet 40 × 28¼ inches.

31. *Apple Core—Spring*, 1990. Lithograph printed in colors. Edition: 57, plus 12 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 27½ × 21¼ inches, the sheet 40 × 28¼ inches.

32. *Apple Core—Summer*, 1990. Lithograph printed in colors. Edition: 54, plus 10 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 27½ × 21¼ inches, the sheet 40 × 28¼ inches.



© Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, 1990

32.

33. *Apple Core—Winter*, 1990. Lithograph printed in colors. Edition: 59, plus 12 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 27½ × 21¼ inches, the sheet 40 × 28¼ inches.

34. *Extinguishing Match*, 1990. Lithograph printed in colors. Edition: 58, plus 12 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 24 × 17 inches, the sheet 40 × 30¼ inches.

35. *Profiterole*, 1990. Lithograph printed in colors. Edition: 57, plus 12 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 22½ × 30½ inches, the sheet 31 × 40½ inches.

36. *Profiterole (Grey—State I)*, 1990. Lithograph printed in colors. Edition: 58, plus 12 artist's proofs. Printed and published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. Signed and numbered in pencil. 22½ × 30½ inches, the sheet 31 × 40½ inches.

References

Margo Leavin Gallery. *Oldenburg: Works In Edition*. Los Angeles: 1971.

Sparks, Esther. *Universal Limited Art Editions. A History and a Catalogue: The First Twenty-Five Years*. New York: 1989.



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